

From 2002-2017, to What Extent Has Turkish Security Policy Been Effective?

A Monograph

by

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ABSTRACT

From 2002-2017, to What Extent Has Turkish Security Policy Been Effective?

By Colonel William Robert Lynch CBE, British Army, 63pp.

This monograph examines Turkish foreign and domestic security policy since 2002 in order to understand how the effective delivery of policy has been influenced by changing Turkish perceptions of the role of religion, history, geography, the military and key political figures. Turkey has gradually undergone a transformation away from its secular roots as envisaged by the founder of the modern Turkish state, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The role of religion, so long repressed as Turkey sought to create a secular state, has re-emerged as a powerful force in Turkish politics, and eventually brought the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP) Islamist leaning party to power in 2002. Turkish perceptions of its history and central geographic position, particularly as it relates to the Ottoman Empire period, has also become a key driver in policymaking. The role of the Turkish military has undergone a fundamental transformation with its traditional role as the 'guarantors of the state' in the Kemalist tradition challenged and ultimately broken by the AKP leadership. The cult of personality has once again come to the fore, with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, first as Prime Minister and now the incumbent President, dominating Turkish politics in a way not seen since Atatürk in the 1920s-1930s. Turkey's perception of regional and major actors such as the U.S. and Russia has also fundamentally changed, with Turkey adopting a more aggressive policy internally and externally in response to changing security threats. As a result of the complex interaction of these varying factors, this paper concludes that the effectiveness of Turkey's security policymaking has declined to the point where it has become reactive and therefore generally ineffective in realizing Turkey's foreign and domestic policy goals.

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This monograph has been a continuation of my desire to further understand the dynamics that drive Turkish policy choices. This interest was first piqued in Cyprus while serving opposite Turkish forces while on a tour with the United Nations in 2002 and again while serving with many Turkish colleagues in the Middle East throughout 2015 in the fight against Daesh. I owe a debt of gratitude to my monograph Director, Robert T. Davis II PhD, who continually challenged my analysis throughout to ensure that I explored the nuances of Turkish policy choices. I have also been fortunate to be able to draw on a wealth of critical journalism of the current state of play in Turkey, which has been unflinching in its analysis of the situation inside Turkey, no matter the risk to the individuals responsible. Finally, I also owe a huge amount to my long-suffering wife Deborah who has put up with the highs and lows of writing such a tome with characteristic good humor and minimal sympathy where required.

ACRONYMS

AKP: *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*/Justice and Development Party

EHCR: European Court of Human Rights

FMS: Foreign Military Sales

PKK: Kurdistan Workers Party

KRI: Kurdistan Region of Iraq

KRG: Kurdish Regional Government

PYD: Kurdish Democratic Union Party

IIP: Iraqi Islamic Muslim Party

ISIS: Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

IDF: Israeli Defense Forces

ISI: Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate

MHP: Nationalist Movement Party

MGK: National Security Council

NUC: National Unity Committee

MFA: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MEK: Mojahedin-e Khalq

HDP: The Peoples' Democratic Party

CHP: Republican People's Party

RoC: Republic of Cyprus

TIKA: Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency

TRNC: Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

YPG: Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units

VEOs: Violent Extremist Organizations

INTRODUCTION

This monograph analyzes the success and failures of Turkish foreign and domestic security policy from 2002 to the present day. It does so by analyzing Turkish demographics, geography, history, and contemporary affairs. Once this context has been laid out for the reader, an in-depth analysis of the formulation of domestic security policy followed by foreign security policy are then undertaken separately. This is a deliberate choice as although Turkish domestic security policy influences foreign security policy and vice versa, the actors involved are sufficiently different to warrant separate analysis.

The analysis of domestic policy focuses on the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*/Justice and Development Parties (AKP) approach to dealing with the Kurdish issue, the impact of the 15 July 2016 coup and internal politics and how this has influenced the development of policy. The study of foreign security policy first examines Turkish approaches to the use of soft power, before conducting an analysis of Turkish relationships with regional actors. Policy towards the main influences on Turkey are then examined, starting with the U.S., followed by Russia, NATO and the European Union (EU). This framework was chosen as I judged that these states and institutions have the most influence on Turkey, and thus provide the best scope for analysis of Turkish policy choices.

METHODOLOGY

2002 was chosen as the start point for this study as this represents a watershed in Turkish politics as the AKP was the first Islamic leaning party to be elected since the formation of the Turkish state in 1923. This period also represents a fundamental shift in Turkish politics with one party having a clear majority, without the need for coalitions that have characterised Turkish politics for decades. It provided a good place to start.

LITERATURE REVIEW

William Hale's updated 2013 third edition of his *Turkish foreign policy, 1774-2000* is the starting point for understanding how Turkish security policy has been historically been formulated. This provides essential context to understand pre-2002 decision making. In seeking to understand Turkish historical and political context pre-2002, there are a wealth of other sources available. David Fromkin's 2009 work *A Peace to end all Peace: The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the modern Middle East* provides essential context to understand the impact of Britain and France's post WW1 political maneuvering on modern Turkey.¹ Bernard Lewis's 1968 analysis *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* provides essential context for understanding Turkey's position post WW2.² Hugh and Nicole Pope's *Turkey Unveiled* provides a candid and comprehensive overview of Turkey, replete with nuanced insights into Turkey's internal dynamics up to 2011. In seeking to understand Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Kinross's 1965 study *Atatürk* and Andrew Mango's 2000 more up to date study *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* provide essential political context and are a must read to gain an understanding of this central figure in Turkey's history.³ Kinross's study, although older, is the more balanced and informative account.

Bernard Lewis's other work *What Went Wrong?: The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* provides a more up to date analysis and is useful for understanding post 2002 politics and the increasing role of Islam.⁴ In conducting a study of contemporary Turkish foreign policy, it rapidly became apparent that the major sources available are rapidly becoming overtaken by events, given the pace of change in Turkish politics. Of those available that cover this period,

¹ William Hale, *Turkish foreign policy, 1774-2000*. 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013).

² David Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, 20th anniversary ed. (New York, NY: H. Holt and Co., 2009).

³ Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (New York: Overlook, 2000); Patrick Balfour Kinross, *Atatürk: A biography of Mustafa Kemal, father of modern Turkey* (New York: Morrow, 1965).

⁴ Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?: The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York: Perennial, 2003).

Aaron Stein of the Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies (RUSI) October 2014 study *Turkey's new foreign policy: Davutoglu, the AKP and the pursuit of regional order* provides a useful analysis of Turkey's foreign policy decision making, however; even this work has been rapidly overtaken by events with the rise of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS, hereafter referred to as Daesh).⁵ Increasingly, the best sources of up to date policy analysis come from online resources such as the Turkish *Insight Turkey* and *Hürriyet Daily News* or from other avenues such as online media like *Foreign Affairs*, *The Washington Post*, *The Times of London*, *The BBC* and *Al Jazeera*.

In seeking to understand the Kurdish dimension to Turkish politics, unbiased accounts are hard to find. The most informative and unbiased source found was Bill Park and The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) 2005 analysis: *Turkey's policy towards northern Iraq: Problems and Perspectives*.⁶ This does well to place the Kurdish issue in Turkey and Iraq into context without the hyperbole of most Turkish source publications.

⁵ Aaron Stein and Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies, *Turkey's new foreign policy: Davutoğlu, the AKP and the pursuit of regional order*. V.83, (London: Routledge, 2014).

⁶ Bill Park and International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Turkey's policy towards northern Iraq: Problems and Perspectives* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005). Park does well to synthesize the competing political narratives in the region to provide the reader with a cogent understanding of the shifting dynamics of Turkish, Kurdish and US policymaking. Turkish or Kurdish publications seem to be unable to provide an unbiased argument, given their recent history.

COMMON INFLUENCES ON TURKISH SECURITY POLICY

DEMOGRAPHICS

Turkey, a country of some eighty million persons, is ethnically diverse and has a patchwork of different ethnic groupings that influence Turkish security policy. The CIA World Factbook estimated that in 2008, the ethnic breakdown of Turkey was 70-75% Turkish, 18% Kurdish and other minorities 7-12%. Within these minority groupings are ancient peoples such as Alevis and Yazidis as well as trace elements of remaining Greek, Armenian, Jewish and Christian communities.⁷ After World War One (WW1), Turkish demographics were fundamentally altered with the mass exodus of the Armenian and Greek populations; indeed there is still much controversy in Turkey over the Turkish role in what is generally referred to as the ‘Armenian Genocide’, where upwards of 1.5 million Armenians are thought to have perished.⁸ On 30 January 1923, after the conclusion of the Greco/Turkish war that had lasted nearly three years, the two governments signed a convention at Lausanne that resulted in almost two million people moving throughout the region. Around 1.2 million Orthodox Christians left Turkey for (mainly) Greece and around 350,000 Muslims migrated from Greece to Turkey. This mass population exchange had a profound impact on Turkey’s demographics and continues to be a policy issue for Turkey to the present day.⁹

Although ethnically diverse, the Factbook estimated that the population is 99.8% Sunni Muslim, with 0.2% of the population still being considered Jewish/Christian. Although upwards of

⁷ Minority Rights Group International, accessed 14 Dec 16, <http://minorityrights.org/minorities/alevis/>. Alevi is the term used for many heterodox Muslim Shi’a communities with different characteristics. Thus, Alevis constitute the largest religious minority in Turkey, Ezidis (also referred to as Yezidis) adhere to a non-monotheist religion of ancient origin in the Middle East. While they are ethnic Kurds, Ezidis emphasize their distinct religious identity. The number of Ezidis remaining in Turkey is unknown.

⁸ Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian genocide: A Complete History* (London: IB Tauris, 2011), 807-811.

⁹ Renee Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 13-20.

18% of the population identifies itself as being ethnically Kurdish, the overwhelming majority still identify as Sunni Muslims.¹⁰ This fact is important as one of the main aims of the Turkish state since its inception in 1923 has been to inculcate a sense of ‘Turkishness’ amongst the population, underpinned by a secular interpretation of Sunni Muslim faith. This interpretation of Islam aimed to prevent religion from becoming a dominant facet in the new Turkey.¹¹ The demographics of modern Turkey have thus conspired to create a significant minority (the Kurds) who are artificially separated from other Kurdish populations in Iraq, Syria and Iran and who have forcibly been required to become ‘Turkish.’ Turkish state attempts at forced assimilation has therefore driven Kurdish separatist demands since 1923.

GREAT POWER INFLUENCES

The First World War (WW1) was disastrous for Turkey and resulted in the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the near eclipse of Turkey as a fledgling nation state. The Treaty of Sèvres was proposed by France and Great Britain as the peace agreement between the victorious Allies and the Ottoman Empire at the end of WW1. The provisions of the treaty aimed to dismember the Ottoman Empire, and proposed allocating large portions to Allied control and creating zones of Armenian and Kurdish autonomy. This proposed reduction of Ottoman territorial integrity coupled with Turkish victories over the Greeks in 1921/1922 created a surge of Turkish nationalist sentiment and as a result encouraged continued resistance.¹² The Turks were eventually able to defeat the Greek Army at Smyrna in September 1922 and prevent the Allied powers from imposing

¹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook*, accessed 07 December 16, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>.

¹¹ Nicole Pope and Hugh Pope, *Turkey unveiled: A history of Modern Turkey* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press 2011), 11-13.

¹² Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 252.

the conditions of the Treaty of Sèvres. In 1922, the un-ratified Treaty of Sèvres was replaced with the more comprehensive Treaty of Lausanne which recognized the modern Turkish state.¹³

The profound impact of the Treaty of Sèvres continues to resonate and influence Turkish domestic security thinking to the present day. Commentators have referred to a Turkish Treaty of Sèvres ‘psychosis,’ with populist conspiracy theories continuing to abound in Turkey over former Great Powers (i.e. Britain and France) and U.S. machinations to weaken or even dismember the Turkish state.¹⁴ Indeed, many Turks believe that the U.S., Britain, and the EU actively want to weaken Turkey by seeking the creation of a separate Kurdish state.¹⁵

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE LEGACY

Three enduring legacies of the Ottoman Empire continue to impact decision making in modern Turkey. The Ottoman legacy created a modern Turkish political system that 1) has a perceived need for strong central control, 2) uses Islam as a control mechanism, and 3) has historically (until the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*/Justice and Development Party (AKP) rose to power in 2002) accepted the primacy of the military in political affairs. The most enduring (and important) part of the Ottoman Empire legacy was the relation of the military to the state. From the Janissary Corps to the Committee on Unity and Progress (CUP) formed during WW1, the military has long been the arbiter of political power.¹⁶

¹³ David Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, 20th anniversary ed. (New York, NY: H. Holt and Co., 2009), 559.

¹⁴ Bill Park and International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Turkey's policy towards northern Iraq: Problems and Perspectives* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005), 13.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Nicole Pope and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled* (New York: Overlook, 2011), 30-34. The Janissaries were introduced in the fourteenth century as a permanent cadre in the Ottoman Army, which otherwise generally consisted of feudal levies. Initially they consisted of Christian captives but later, given their military prowess, Muslim families began to encourage their sons to join. Famed for their discipline, the Janissaries were highly effective through the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. Because of their prowess, they began to meddle directly in Ottoman politics and even overthrew Sultan Selim II. They were eventually confronted and destroyed by Sultan Mahmut II in 1826. The CUP was formed by a group of Turkish exiles in Paris in 1908 and became collectively known as the ‘Young Turks’ who later overthrew Sultan Abdüllhamit in January 1913.

The Ottoman Empire era in terms of history, geography and architecture continues to exert a powerful influence on Turkish policymakers today, as it does on other formal colonial powers such as Great Britain, France, and Italy. The Ottoman period is regarded with some nostalgia, and the notion of harnessing Islam as a unifying force particularly appeals to Turkish government policymakers.¹⁷ The systemic integration of the military in determining policymaking, so prevalent since the formation of modern Turkey, has begun to wane as the military's power base is severely weakened when compared to its heyday in the 1960s-1990s.

THE LEGACY OF MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATÜRK

No discussion of Turkish security policy is complete without understanding the legacy of the “father of the Turks” - Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Atatürk, an iron-willed autocrat, was the most successful Turkish military figure of WW1 and the subsequent fight for independence.¹⁸ His legacy was, in part, captured in what has become known as ‘Kemalism.’ This was articulated in his six principles of “Kemalism:” 1) republicanism, 2) secularism, 3) nationalism, 4) populism, 5) statism and 6) revolutionism. These principles formed the core of Turkish political ideology and until at least the late 1990s were the lens through which most Turkish policymakers saw themselves.¹⁹ An important attribute (not explicitly iterated by Atatürk), and subsequently enshrined in later constitutions, was the assertion that “the military has both the right and the responsibility to intervene in affairs of state, when absolutely necessary in order to guarantee the system's continuance.”²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid., 353.

¹⁸ Mustafa Kemal was bestowed with the name Atatürk on 24 November 1934. This was decreed in a special law passed by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). However, for the purposes of this monograph he will be referred to as Atatürk throughout for consistency. Biography.com Editors, accessed 5 March 2017, <http://www.biography.com/people/mustafa-kemal-ataturk-20968109>.

¹⁹ Patrick Balfour Kinross, *Atatürk: A biography of Mustafa Kemal, father of modern Turkey* (New York: Morrow, 1965), 518.

²⁰ Paul J. White, *Primitive rebels or revolutionary modernizers? The Kurdish national movement in Turkey* (New York: Zed Books, 2000), 130.

Atatürk's own brand of nationalism and associated military tradition was a consequence and continuation of Ottoman reforms that sought to move the Turkish population into the modern age.²¹ Atatürk's central doctrine emphasized the need to keep the Turkish state within balance. He advocated a system and associated policy choices that retained nationalist identity, while simultaneously supporting efforts to Westernize and modernize, but kept Turkey's Islamic customs in equilibrium. Atatürk was clear that failure to maintain this delicate balance could result in the fledgling Turkish republic dissolving as the Ottoman Empire had. Atatürk was determined to adopt a more secular approach to maintain the delicate balance between these competing entities.

THE CREATION OF TURKISH IDENTITY

In his 1923 work 'The Principles of Turkism,' Islamic scholar Ziya Gokalp devised the intellectual theory to support Atatürk's secularization agenda. This was driven by a sense that the Ottoman Empire had eventually failed as it did not regulate the impact of religion on politics, which ultimately constrained thinking and led to the Empire's denouement. Gokalp advanced the hypothesis that the Quran and teachings of Mohammed were *specifically* relevant to the social context of when they were written (from 609 CE). Gokalp hypothesized that the rules as defined in the Quran were derived during the days of Mohammed and therefore needed to be updated to meet the realities of the early 20th century.²² One of Atatürk's first steps (in 1924) to reduce the impact of Islam on Turkish society was the creation of the Department of Religious Affairs, which exists today as the Presidency of Religious Affairs or *Diyanet*. The *Diyanet* is the single government agency with the responsibility to incorporate Islam into the functions of the Turkish state. Atatürk subsequently disbanded state sponsored religious schools and forbade religiously based political parties, although this trend is being steadily reversed by the AKP.

²¹ Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds and the future of Turkey* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 6.

²² C. H. Dodd, *Democracy and Development in Turkey* (Northgate: Eothen Press, 1979), 81.

The Turkish state, through the *Diyanet*, allowed and encouraged Islamic theological assemblies to function, but its total control of the output of these assemblies removed their ability to participate fully in political affairs. The Turkish state perceived itself as being entrusted with the considerable task of incorporating the Ottoman era interpretation of Islam within the new doctrine of Kemalism. This resulted in the Kemalist vision of Islam as one that did not voice opinions or criticize the state vision of Islam without concurrently de-legitimizing its own existence. This notion of “bureaucratized” Islam was central to the Kemalist vision of subordinating the concept of identity derived from Islam to one derived from the Turkish nation.²³ This left no room for other ethnic identities such as the Kurds to practice their form of Islam, which inevitably led to conflict.

TURKISH POLITICS

An enduring feature of Turkish policymaking is the fragmented political situation in Turkey. Islamist oriented parties were also banned until the election of the AKP in 2002. The current political system in Turkey was established following the September 1980 coup, with no single party holding a majority from 1980 to push through policy until the rise of the AKP in 2002. Party ideologies swing from far left to far-right extremes, with ethnic minorities such as the Kurds generally unable to decisively influence policymaking in the Turkish parliament.

The main party since 2002 is the AKP. The AKP currently holds 317 seats in the 550-seat parliament since the 2015 general election, enough to form a simple majority, single party government. The AKP’s main opposition is the Republican People’s Party (CHP), a social-democratic political party, formed by Atatürk in 1923. The CHP is Turkey’s oldest party and currently the main opposition in the Turkish parliament, where it holds 134 seats. The center-left CHP stresses its close ties to the era of Turkey’s first president, Atatürk, and aims to defend the fundamental Kemalist values of republicanism and secularism.

²³ Christopher Houston, *Islam, Kurds and the Turkish Nation State* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 90.

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) was established in 2012 as the political wing of the Peoples' Democratic Congress, a union of left-leaning Kurdish political organizations. The People's Democratic Party is situated on the left of the Turkish political scene and the party represents in particular the interests of Turkey's Kurdish minority. This is of note as until 1990, Kurdish political parties were banned.²⁴ The HDP currently has fifty nine seats in the parliament but has generally been unable to form coalitions with the CHP or AKP to influence policymaking, given their differing ideologies. The final party of note is the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). The MHP does not support Turkey's possible membership in the European Union, is vehemently opposed to Kurdish demands for further autonomy and opposes the peace process between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The MHP currently has forty seats in the Turkish parliament.²⁵

The chaotic Turkish political system, which has historically required an array of coalitions to be formed to get policy passed into law, has resulted in a system where consensus for formulating common policy has been lacking. In a proposed fundamental change to the Turkish Constitution, the current Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is proposing changes that would scrap the office of prime minister to prevent leadership conflicts and unwieldy coalition governments of the sort that have paralyzed political activity in the past.²⁶ This would remove some checks and balances on the president and give Erdoğan greatly expanded powers.

²⁴ "History of Kurdish political parties in Turkey," *HDP Europe*, accessed 13 February 2017, http://en.hdpeurope.com/?page_id=537.

²⁵ "Turkey's Political Parties," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, accessed 13 February 2017, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/10/26/turkey-s-political-parties-pub-61743>.

²⁶ "Turkey's constitutional overhaul," *The Economist*, accessed 13 February 2017, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2016/12/economist-explains-16?zid=307&ah=5e80419d1bc9821ebe173f4f0f060a07>. The referendum on the proposed changes will be held on 16 April 2017 and is expected to be very close.

KEY PLAYERS

Since 2002, two key players are central to the development of a more assertive and less isolationist Turkish foreign policy: Ahmet Davutoğlu and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Davutoğlu, a former professor of international relations and Turkey's foreign minister until May 2014 and Prime Minister until May 2016, has been the architect of Turkey's shift from a more secular, isolationist approach to a more assertive based foreign policy, which recognizes Turkey's historical and geographic importance to the region.²⁷ Erdoğan, Prime Minister from 2003 to 2014 and the incumbent President, has been the other key player in the development of a more assertive Turkish foreign security policy. Often thought of as a rather difficult character, Erdoğan, with strong Islamist credentials, has sought to move Turkey away from the more secular, irreligious path set by Kemalists in Turkey since the birth of the Republic in 1923. This has domestically placed him on a collision course with elements of the Turkish military and political establishment.

MILITARY INFLUENCE

In 1960, the National Unity Committee (NUC), led by the Army, took control of Turkey. The NUC went on to draft a new Constitution and, in so doing, cemented the military's central role in the Turkish government for several decades. Principle among these constitutional changes was subordination of the Chief of the General Staff only to the Prime Minister (vice the Minister of Defense) and creation of the National Security Council (known as the MGK). The MGK, despite recent upheavals, remains as a civilian and military body comprised of cabinet officials, the Chief

²⁷ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring," April 2012, accessed 4 November 2016, http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/vision_paper_TFP2.pdf. Davutoğlu graduated from İstanbul Erkek Lisesi, which is a Deutsche Auslandsschule (German International School) and studied at the Department of Economics and Political Science of the Boğaziçi University, İstanbul. He holds a master's degree in Public Administration and a PhD degree in Political Science and International Relations from Boğaziçi University. Between 1993 and 1999 Davutoğlu worked at Marmara University and became a full professor in 1999. He was the chairman of the Department of International Relations at Beykent University in İstanbul.

of the General Staff, and other serving force commanders. Its primary focus is on national security issues, but the MGK is also granted wide authority on economic and social policy and until recently was given virtual veto authority on all government policy. This enshrined the role of the military in deciding the course of national security policy for several decades.²⁸ This trend continued with subsequent coups in 1971, 1980 and 1997 which continually reasserted the role of the Turkish military as the guarantors of the Kemalist vision of Turkey.²⁹ The Turkish military's view was that only through a strong central authority could political process be confined within acceptable limits as defined by the MGK.³⁰

The mechanism for enforcement of these boundaries has traditionally been the Army. Intervention by the Army in politics is enshrined in public law and until recently generally accepted as part and parcel of Turkish politics. Civilian politicians and administrators, until the election of the AKP, were continually faced with the challenge of keeping dialogue and policy within the allowed tolerances as defined by the Army. The promotion and protection of the enshrined secular Kemalist ideology by the Army has thus limited policy options and defined how national security policy objectives were to be met.

²⁸ Nicole Pope and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled* (New York: Overlook, 2011), 92-96.

²⁹ "Timeline: A history of Turkish coups," *Al Jazeera*, accessed 09 February 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2012/04/20124472814687973.html>.

³⁰ Dietrich Jung and Wolfgang Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2001), 62.

ANALYSIS OF TURKISH DOMESTIC SECURITY POLICY 2002-2017

OVERVIEW

One overarching aim has driven Turkish domestic security policy since 2002 - preventing the establishment of a separate Kurdish state either within Turkey or in Iraq (after 2003) and more recently Syria.³¹ However, as with many issues in modern Turkey, history, demographics and religion continue to exercise a strong influence on the formation of Turkish domestic policy as previously outlined. There is no discernible doctrine driving AKP domestic security policy other than preventing Kurdish autonomy, although Ahmet Davutoğlu probably came closest when he articulated the idea in 2012 that Turkey must establish a lasting “security/freedom balance...by liberalizing its political system and abandoning its erroneous habits of the past, when viewing society as a potential enemy sucked its energy in vicious internal discussions.”³²

PKK ORIGINS

Historically, Turkish state neglect of Kurdish regions has further deepened the social and economic divide between traditional Kurdish regions in southeastern Turkey and the much more prosperous western Turkish regions.³³ Combined with a turbulent cycle of political unrest and military coups, it is surprising that it took until 1978 for the Marxist inspired (and primarily Syrian Ba'athist supported) PKK to officially be formed and for a determined insurgency to take hold. Led by the charismatic Abdullah Öcalan, in 1984 the insurgency, stoked by heavy handed Turkish

³¹ Especially since U.S. support for the YPG (the armed wing of the Democratic Union Party (Kurdish: *Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat*, PYD; a left-wing Kurdish political party established in 2003 by Kurdish activists in northern Syria) has continued unabated despite vehement Turkish opposition for what the Turkish security apparatus considers ‘terrorists’.

³² Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Centre for Strategic Research (SAM): Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring,” accessed 13 February 2017, <http://sam.gov.tr/principles-of-turkish-foreign-policy-and-regional-political-structuring/>.

³³ Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey: A political dilemma* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 12. The so-called Ararat rebellion (1927-30) was the largest and best known, but there was continual unrest until 1937, with circa 30 Kurdish rebellions of various scales and severity taking place.

security force tactics, began in earnest. The PKK also enjoyed the support of other regional powers such as the Ba'athist regimes in Syria and Iraq and the Islamic regime in Iran, who used the PKK as means to counter Turkish ambitions in the wider trans-Asian region.

The details of the Turkish campaign against the PKK are not recounted here. The underlying policy choices that have fueled continued unrest are examined in detail.³⁴ The Turkish government has generally approached the issue of defeating the Kurdish insurgency as a military problem. Political negotiations have been given some opportunity to deliver tangible results, but temporary ceasefires and the policy choices leading up to making such decisions have never sought to answer the underlying social, economic and security challenges that have created the conditions for the PKK to flourish in southeastern Turkey. Indeed, there are striking similarities to the way that Israel has sought to tackle the ongoing insurgency in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; the use of force as a primary response is also usually the means of choice.³⁵

An insight into the Turkish view of the Kurds at the highest level was provided by the then Foreign Minister Ismail Cem, who in 2001 linked backwardness, 'Kurdishness' and the PKK terrorist activities implicitly together in a monologue:

On the other hand, the link between separatist terror and the backward feudal structures in South-East Turkey should be taken into consideration. Separatist terror draws its strength mainly from feudal landlords of Kurdish origin. At first glance this may seem as a contradiction. One might wonder what these extremely wealthy feudal landlords who own tens of villages and exploit landless peasants have in common with separatists and terrorists. However, sharing the same values and concepts, the feudal system and the separatist terror organization have become de facto allies. To maintain their existence, both must protect, preserve and promote feudal values such as "race", "kinship", and "tribal links." The terrorist movement is based on the principle of race. It is a racist movement; racist, just like the feudal system, like the guardians, beneficiaries of this system.³⁶

³⁴ For a detailed account of the formation of the PKK and the ensuing insurgency (up to 2007) see Åsa Lundgren, *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish policy* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007). 74-79.

³⁵ Aaron David Miller, "A history of sustainable violence," *Foreign Policy*, 18 May 2016, accessed 5 March 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/19/a-history-of-sustainable-violence-israel-palestinian-authority-john-kerry-peace/>.

³⁶ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century* (Mersin: Rustem Bookshop, 2001), 115.

Even reading this some sixteen years after it was uttered, one gets a strong sense of the underlying sense of dislike, hatred even, of Kurds by those in power in the central Turkish state. There is a strong sentiment that Kurdish backwardness, tribalism, superstition and clinging to 'the old ways' is responsible for the prolonged Kurdish insurgency, despite attempts to convince ethnic Kurds that remaining a part of Turkey is in their best interests.

ENDING SUPPORT FOR THE PKK

The breakthrough that ended the prolonged insurgency of the 1980s/1990s came about in October 1998. After several high-profile attacks by the PKK inside Turkey, staged from Syria, Turkey demanded that Syria stop supporting Öcalan and the PKK and threatened a full-scale invasion of northern Syria to clear the region of PKK camps and infrastructure. The Syrian leadership, at the time led by Hafez al-Assad, was keen to normalize relations with Turkey to increase trade links, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Assad compromised, agreed to cease all aid to the PKK and expelled Öcalan. Öcalan was subsequently captured in Kenya in 1999 and a ceasefire was declared between the Turkish state and the PKK. The state of emergency that had been in place since 1987 was lifted in the last southeastern provinces in November 2002. This improvement in the domestic security situation finally persuaded the European Union to grant Turkey EU candidate status, thus fulfilling a long held Turkish ambition.

CHANGES IN POLICY

The next major catalyst for change in Turkish domestic security policy towards the Kurds was the rapid ascension to power of the AKP in November 2002. The AKP, having campaigned as an anti-establishment party, appealed to many Kurds as its leadership (Erdoğan and his close advisor Ahmet Davutoğlu) campaigned on a platform of opposing the official Turkish secular (i.e. anti-Kurd and anti-Islamic) policies that had been enshrined by the Kemalists of the CHP since the inception of the Turkish state. As soon as the AKP came to power, it began an ambitious program

of reform to meet the requirements of EU accession with many of the conditions for this aligned with greater political recognition of the Kurds. These reform efforts by Erdoğan and the AKP leadership led to some progress on the diplomatic front with the PKK and a more lasting ceasefire was agreed that lasted until 2004. However, in 2004, the PKK once again resumed operations inside Turkey due to alleged breaches of the agreement by the Turkish military and it was not until 2012 that another lasting ceasefire came into effect.³⁷

The years 2012-2014 saw an uneasy truce hold. Turkish foreign and domestic security policy then collided in late 2014 with profound consequences for the internal security situation in Turkey. The so-called Islamic State (hereafter referred to as Daesh) group swept all before it in the summer of 2014, defeating the Iraqi Security Forces in detail, seizing Mosul and at one stage threatening Baghdad itself. In Syria, the Kurdish Peshmerga were soundly defeated on a number of occasions; it was only the decision by US President Barrack Obama on 8 August 2014 to authorize strikes on Daesh that enabled the Peshmerga to halt the group.³⁸

KOBANÎ AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PKK INSURGENCY

A hitherto insignificant town on the border between Turkey and Syria called Kobanî became symbolic of the Kurdish Peshmerga's struggle against Daesh. Kobanî also highlighted the Turkish government's apathy to providing support to Kurds, whether they be Turkish, Syrian or Iraqi. With the help of US airpower, the Peshmerga were eventually able to halt Daesh's advance on Kobanî and were then able to push Daesh out of the Kobanî canton altogether. The media images of Turkish Army units passively watching the fighting from inside Turkey, while Turkish officials prevented Kurdish refugees from fleeing into Turkey to escape the fighting enraged many

³⁷ "Kurdish Group to Pull Armed Units from Turkey," *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 April 2013, accessed 12 December 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324743704578444630691252760>.

³⁸ "Obama authorises Iraq air strikes on Islamist fighters," *BBC News*, 08 August 2014, accessed 15 Dec 16, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28699832>.

Kurds. The then Prime Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, in an October 2014 interview with the *British Daily Telegraph* outlined Turkey's conditions for 'assisting' in Kobanî: "Equip and train the Free Syrian Army so that if the Islamic State leaves, PKK terrorists should not come...if they don't want to send their ground troops [i.e. US/British and maybe French], how can they expect Turkey to send Turkish ground troops with the same risks on our border?"³⁹

The lack of a coherent Turkish military response to ease the plight of Kurds in Kobanî resulted in widespread rioting by Kurds in south-eastern Turkey and mistrust between Kurdish politicians and the population of the Turkish state reaching its nadir. Inevitably, this led to the PKK ending its ceasefire with the Turkish state and in June 2015, the PKK resumed military operations against Turkish military and civilian targets. This renewed insurgency has already claimed the lives of many civilians and Turkish military personnel.⁴⁰ Erdoğan's response was to order increasingly harsher measures to deal with the renewed insurgency, setting Turkish policy back into its familiar framework of military force being used as the primary option. There has been no sign that this pattern will be alleviated by political dialogue.

THE IMPACT OF THE 15 JULY 2016 COUP

The coup on 15 July 2016 was perhaps not unexpected, however, its impact on internal security policy in Turkey has been momentous. Since coming to power in 2002, the AKP under Erdoğan steadily reduced the military's influence on Turkish politics with the result that the once all powerful Turkish armed forces ability to influence politics was fundamentally eroded.⁴¹ To meet

³⁹ Ahmet Davutoglu, interview by Colin Freeman, "Turkey sets conditions for helping West in Kobanî crisis in Syria. Interview with Prime Minister," *British Daily Telegraph*, 28 Oct 2014, accessed 15 December 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11193995/Turkey-sets-conditions-for-helping-West-in-Kobane-crisis-in-Syria.html>.

⁴⁰ The International Crisis Group (ICG), "Turkey's PKK Conflict: The Rising Toll," accessed 10 January 17, <http://www.crisisgroup.be/interactives/turkey/>. The ICG, a respected international agency, puts the combined Turkish/Kurdish civilian and military death toll at 2,301, since July 2015. This is a rate double that of the last major bout of violence, from July 2011-December 2012, when less than 1,000 people were killed.

⁴¹ Gonul Tol, "Turkey's Next Military Coup," *Foreign Affairs*, 30 May 2016, accessed 15 January 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2016-05-30/turkeys-next-military-coup>.

EU accession criteria, Erdoğan also implemented measures to bring the military within civilian control, reducing the power of the MGK. Legislation was passed that limited the jurisdiction of military courts in favor of civilian courts, and Erdoğan played a prominent role in the appointment of top military commanders. A further reduction in the Turkish military's standing occurred in April 2007. The Turkish military, echoing its so called 'coup by memorandum' of 1997, posted to its website an ultimatum (later called the "e-coup") to warn the AKP and Erdoğan against backing Abdullah Gul, who previously belonged to an Islamist party and whose wife wore a *hijab* (headscarf), for the Turkish presidency. Most of the population and the AKP leadership rejected this ultimatum, and Gul was duly confirmed. The military's attempt to intervene against such a popular party as the AKP dealt a serious blow to its standing in many sections of Turkish society. In an early election held right after the "e-coup" attempt, the AKP increased its vote share by 13 percent.⁴²

Interestingly, given that the so-called Gülenists (an Islamic movement linked to the U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gülen) were blamed for the coup by Erdoğan, the AKP's then allies in the judiciary, the same Gülenists, launched several criminal investigations of military officers *in support* of Erdoğan. Under the *Ergenekon* and *Sledgehammer* prosecutions, which alleged a military conspiracy to overthrow the AKP government, scores of high ranking officers were imprisoned and hundreds of retired military officers detained.⁴³ The conflict between the AKP and

⁴² Izgi Gungor, "From Landmark Success to Closure: AKP's Journey," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 7 July 2008, accessed 12 January 2017, <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=-634073>. The share of the seats AKP occupied in the Parliament decreased because of a change in electoral laws. AKP's victory was sweeping by the standards of Turkey, which was historically accustomed to rule by coalition governments. The July 2007 general elections handed AKP a considerable electoral victory. AKP won 46.6 percent of the vote—unseen in Turkey since the 1950s—and 341 out of the 550 seats in Parliament.

⁴³ Guney Yildiz, "Ergenekon: The court case that changed Turkey," *BBC News Turkish*, 5 April 2013, accessed 15 January 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23581891>. The *Ergenekon* case was one of the biggest in recent Turkish history, pitting Erdogan's supporters in the Islamist-rooted AK Party against the secularist military establishment; the trial and the legal reforms around it have ended the Kemalist model of checks and balances between different pillars of authority within Turkey. Verdicts were handed down on 15 April 2013 against 30 high ranking Turkish military officers including the Chief of Defense and the Chiefs of the Army and Air Force.

the military culminated in the mass resignation of Turkey's military high command in late July 2011.⁴⁴ This breaking of the military's power over politics was a pivotal point in Turkish civil-military relations.⁴⁵ These actions in support of the AKP and Erdoğan were backed by Gülenist linked members of the Turkish judiciary.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The breakdown in the relationship between the Gülenists and Erdoğan's AKP was brought about by conflict of interests over several years. The Gülenists had supported the AKP when it was founded on a pro-European and business-friendly platform in the wake of a 1997 coup. Gülenists and the AKP found common cause in seeking to oppose the military and the more authoritarian style of Turkish rule it represented. Since 2007, the relationship has steadily declined. Both sides accused each other of wanting to consolidate power. Drawing on grassroots support, the Gülenists continued to dominate the judiciary and police forces with followers loyal to the movement.⁴⁶ The breakdown of this relationship of convenience was brought about in December 2013, when a wide-ranging investigation launched by Gülenist associated judiciary members into corruption in Erdoğan's inner circle led to the resignations of several ministers and the arrest of many of their associates. Erdoğan declared that the investigation was an outright attempt at a judicial "coup" by a parallel authority within the state.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ "Generallerin Yüzde 10'u Hapiste [Ten Percent of Generals Jailed]," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 15 February 2011, accessed 17 Jan 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/17024835.asp>. 30 of the 301 Generals and Admirals serving in the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) were arrested. This constitutes about 10 percent of the Generals and Admirals in the TSK.

⁴⁵ Marc Champion, "Top Soldier's Retirement Shocks Turkey," *Wall Street Journal - Eastern Edition*, 30 July 2011, A8. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost, accessed 15 January 2017. Gen. Isik Kosaner, Turkey's Chief of the General Staff, retired a year ahead of schedule. His resignation came as a shock in Turkey.

⁴⁶ Kareem Shaheen, "Erdoğan vs. the Gülenists: from political allies to Turkey's bitter rivals", *The Guardian online*, 19 July 2016, accessed 15 January 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/19/thousands-detained-as-turkey-vows-to-smoke-out-gulen-supporters>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

An uneasy truce existed between the two parties for the following two and a half years. Erdoğan, to counter Gülenist influence, then appeared to turn back to the Turkish military to increase his power base and succeeded in successfully overturning a number of convictions of high ranking military officers. This occurred on 16 April 2016, when Turkey's highest appeals court overturned the convictions of 275 individuals, including senior military officers, accused of plotting a coup against Erdoğan and the AKP.⁴⁸

The 15 July 2016 coup could be seen as inevitable given the jockeying for power among Turkey's political elites, the secular (Kemalist/military) power brokers and those representing more Islamist (AKP) viewpoints. The coup was ultimately poorly executed and easily quashed by Erdoğan's supporters and AKP loyalists. Erdoğan, speaking on 18 July 2016 (after the coup attempt on Friday 15 July 2016) was clear that: "moving forward, no tolerance or compassion will be shown to supporters of Fethullah Gülen's terrorist group or any other terrorist organization...without compromising democratic principles and the rule of law, we shall combat all terrorist organizations that place the future of our nation and the state at risk."⁴⁹ In a purge after the coup, according to the Turkish Prime Minister, Binali Yıldırım, 40,029 state employees have been detained, of whom 20,355 have been formally arrested. Of those in detention, 4,262 are awaiting a decision on whether they will be formally arrested or released. The overwhelming majority of those arrested are police officers and military personnel, including 157 Army generals. To date, at least 2,131 judges and prosecutors with suspected ties to the Gülenist movement have also been arrested.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ "Turkey Ergenekon: Court quashes 'coup plot' convictions," *BBC News*, 21 April 2016, accessed 15 Jan 17, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36099889>.

⁴⁹ Kareem Shaheen, "Erdoğan vs. the Gülenists: from political allies to Turkey's bitter rivals," *The Guardian online*, 19 July 2016, accessed 15 Jan 17.

⁵⁰ Constanze Letsch, "Turkey's post-coup crackdown - in figures," *The Guardian online*, 19 August 2016, accessed 15 Jan 17, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/datablog/2016/aug/19/turkeys-post-coup-crackdown-in-figures>.

RESULT OF THE COUP

More so than the ongoing campaign against the PKK, the 15 July 2016 coup attempt has fundamentally altered Turkish internal security policymaking, to the detriment of Turkish citizens. The scale of media suppression has earned Turkey the dubious distinction of having more journalists (126 as of October 2016) in prison than China, Iran and Egypt combined. 2,500 Turkish writers, editors and broadcasters have also lost their jobs since the coup failed.⁵¹ The Turkish military has been gutted and many other institutions ranging from schools to hospitals to other associations have either been disbanded or had many of their members arrested. In a related development, on 9 January 2017, the Turkish Parliament began debating legislation that would effectively rewrite the Turkish Constitution, vastly expanding the powers of Erdoğan as President and possibly allowing him to remain in power until 2029. Erdoğan has frequently argued that Turkey needs a strong presidential system, like those in the U.S. or France, to avoid one-off weak coalition governments and to fend off what he describes as “existential threats to the nation.”⁵² If passed, the legislation would go into effect in 2019 and allow Erdoğan to pass legislation by decree.

The impact of the coup has therefore been dramatic. The effectiveness of the Turkish government has been drastically undermined given the wholesale purges of security institutions. Freedom of the press has been greatly undermined by the state of emergency that remains in force. Relations with the U.S. have declined precipitously given Erdoğan’s repeated assertion that Fethullah Gülen (who resides in Pennsylvania) and his supporters were responsible for the coup attempt. Ahmet Davutoğlu’s claim that Turkey had achieved a “security/freedom balance” now

⁵¹ Peter Preston, “General Mayhem guides Turkey’s media repression,” *The Guardian online*, 16 October 2016, accessed 15 January 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/oct/16/turkey-media-repression-general-mayhem-erdogan>.

⁵² Sewell Chan, “Turkey’s Parliament Starts Debate on Expansion of President’s Powers,” *The New York Times*, 9 January 2017, accessed 15 January 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/09/world/middleeast/turkeys-parliament-starts-debate-on-expansion-of-presidents-powers.html?_r=0.

rings somewhat hollow. Marc Pierini, a visiting scholar at Carnegie Europe in Brussels and a former European Union ambassador to Turkey, stated that the post-coup purges in the military, the courts and the police have, paradoxically, compromised Turkey's ability to protect its citizens. Pierini stated that: "as we've seen after the coup, the reaction is way outside of the formal rule of law. You [Turkey] started arresting police and gendarmes, now writers, actors, journalists - so there is no limit...when you start pulling the thread on the rule of law, the whole sweater can come off. And that's where we stand."⁵³ Erdoğan and his supporters, by reacting so strongly to the coup attempt, have also undermined the ability of Turkey to deliver its foreign security policy as their response has drawn harsh criticism, especially from the EU.

⁵³ Tim Arango and Rick Gladstone, "In Turkey's Unrest, Some See an Extreme Version of Post-9/11 America," *The New York Times*, 6 January 2017, accessed 15 January 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/06/world/europe/turkey-terrorist-attacks-erdogan-crackdown.html?action=click&contentCollection=Middle%20East&module=RelatedCoverage®ion=EndOfArticle&pgtype=article>.

TURKISH FOREIGN SECURITY POLICY 2002-2017

THE CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC DEPTH

Davutoğlu with his strong international relations credentials and understanding of associated theory, has reoriented Turkish foreign policy by articulating the need for ‘Strategic Depth.’ With the AKP’s electoral success in 2002 and a loosening of control by the Turkish military on Turkish political parties that were considered more Islamist leaning, Davutoğlu, while foreign minister, defined a much different policy approach to that which had been followed previously.⁵⁴ While Turkish governments have generally paid close attention to their near abroad, successive Kemalist inspired Turkish administrations have preferred to adopt a policy of non-intervention and neutrality to avoid becoming entangled in wider regional affairs. Davutoğlu, as a central figure of the AKP administration since its ascent to power in 2002, has rejected this approach. Inspired by Davutoğlu, Turkish foreign policy has instead sought to create the conditions for ‘Strategic Depth’ by expanding Turkey’s influence throughout the Middle East, through articulating the advantages of Turkey’s geographical position, Ottoman Empire history, religion and resultant experience and rising economic power. This fits with Hale’s analysis of Turkey’s position as a so-called ‘middle power,’ where Turkey “by using its natural advantages of geography, natural and human resources, and its economic development, especially since the 1950s” has sought to place itself at the center of the region and to act as a bridge between eastern and western Eurasia.⁵⁵

Davutoğlu’s central thesis postulated that Turkey and its near abroad (the Eurasian landmass) is central to global security, thus resulting in Turkey being at the epicenter of global geopolitics. Davutoğlu, in his seminal work *Stratejik Derinlik* (Strategic Depth) is clear that the

⁵⁴ Aaron Stein and Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies, *Turkey's new foreign policy: Davutoğlu, the AKP and the pursuit of regional order*. V.83, (London: Routledge, 2014), 2. The *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* or AKP secured 34.2% of the vote in the Nov 2002 Turkish national elections and subsequently won a successful landmark case in 2008 against the Turkish state judiciary which had threatened to shut down the party for displaying “Islamist tendencies”.

⁵⁵ William Hale, *Turkish foreign policy, 1774-2000*. 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), 8.

spread of western power into the Balkans, Central Asia and the Middle East will ultimately be harmful to these regions and to Turkish national interests and therefore must be curbed.⁵⁶ This is the opposite of decades of Kemalist doctrine that has espoused a policy of deliberate westernization and associated modernization.

Davutoğlu and Erdoğan have therefore rejected the previous western leaning approach to foreign policy. Davutoğlu, as early as 2004 in an article in the journal *Radikal*, clearly stated that he considers previous Turkish foreign policy making to have been flawed and based upon a narrow interpretation of Turkish geography and history.⁵⁷ In a sharp deviation with Kemalist doctrine, Davutoğlu proposed that the potency of Islam should be a source of communal strength and legitimacy, rather than something to be feared.⁵⁸ Interestingly, he also drew heavily on the works of Karl Haushofer and Friedrich Ratzel who put forward the original concept of *lebensraum*.⁵⁹

Haushofer's interpretation is based on the thesis that borders are not static and subject to change, so with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey had an opportunity to redefine these boundaries in the absence of Soviet hegemony.⁶⁰ By accepting and applying a Turkish version of *lebensraum* (Davutoğlu uses the Turkish phrase *hayat Alanı*), Davutoğlu proposed that Turkey has a natural sphere of influence in Central Asia. This logic is based on the theory that these states are predominantly Muslim and those countries also sit astride many of the world's key choke points/waterways. Davutoğlu's view was that, given that these countries are Muslim, Turkey's

⁵⁶ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik (Strategic Depth)*, trans by Behlül Özkan, (Istanbul: Kure Yayinlari, 2001).

⁵⁷ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkiye merkez ulke olmalı [Turkey should be the central country]," *Radikal*, 26 February 2004, accessed 15 January 17, http://www.radikal.com.tr/yorum/turkiye_merkez_ulke_olmali-702116.

⁵⁸ Behlül Özkan, "Turkey, Davutoglu and the Idea of Pan-Islamism," *Survival* 56, no. 4, (2014), 119-140, accessed 5 November 2016, *SocINDEX with Full Text*, EBSCOhost.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁶⁰ Holger H. Herwig, "Geopolitik: Haushofer, Hitler and Lebensraum," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22, no. 2/3 (1999), 218-241, accessed 5 November 2016, *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost.

connection to these states via the common bond of Sunni Islam provides an opportunity for Turkey to expand its power and thus create strategic depth.

In *Strategic Depth* and his PhD thesis (“The Impacts of Alternative Weltanschauungs on Political Theories”⁶¹), Davutoğlu argued that western political theories are unsuited to dealing with the Muslim world because they assume that individual knowledge can compete with that of Allah.⁶² Davutoğlu also took aim at theories advanced by Huntington in his iconic “Clash of Civilizations” article that first appeared in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993. Huntington’s claim was: “the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural...The clash of civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.”⁶³ Davutoğlu decried this theory in 1998 in the journal *Perceptions*, when he stated:

Huntington ignores the hegemonic character of western civilization in the formation of the global intellectual/philosophical trends, socio-cultural codes of behavior, and the international order. This is the reason why he blames non-western civilizations for the existing crises and conflicts. He neglects the fact that the Lebensraum of these civilizations was effectively marginalized by the hegemonic paradigm of western civilization.⁶⁴

Davutoğlu also blamed the Middle East’s instability at least partly on flawed western political concepts such as ethnic nationalism, which sought to maintain the boundaries of Middle Eastern states as originally conceived after WW1. Davutoğlu assessed that western style Middle Eastern governments are better served by the Islamic concepts of *Tawhid* (oneness with, or acceptance of Allah) and *Tanzih* (a belief in the purity of Allah). This, he believes, is “the paradigmatic base of

⁶¹ Oxford English Dictionary online, accessed 05 November 2016, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/Weltanschauung>. A philosophy or view of life; the world view of an individual or group

⁶² Behlül Özkan, “Turkey, Davutoglu and the Idea of Pan-Islamism,” 119-140.

⁶³ Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, accessed 13 February 2017, 22, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1993-06-01/clash-civilizations>.

⁶⁴ Ahmet Davutoğlu, “The Clash of Interests: An Explanation of the World (Dis)Order,” *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, No.4 Volume II, December 1997-February 1998, accessed 10 February 2017, <http://sam.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/AhmetDavutoglu3.pdf>.

unity among conflicting schools, sects, and traditions in Islamic history.”⁶⁵ In realizing this vision, Davutoğlu espoused a vision that Middle Eastern governments could be politically and culturally linked to Turkey. This in turn would lessen the significance of national borders. Embracing the concept of *Tawhid* could also reduce many of the regions problems as a catalyst to reduce ethnic nationalism and sectarianism.

IMPLEMENTING ‘STRATEGIC DEPTH’-PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

AKP Foreign policy was initially delivered in a multifaceted manner, utilizing a blend of Davutoğlu’s ‘Strategic Depth’ mantra as well as a more realistic approach which the AKP leadership dubbed ‘*Ostpolitik*’ (a nod to Federal Republic of Germany’s attempts to reach out to the German Democratic Republic during the Cold War and probably the result of Davutoğlu’s attendance at the German International School in Istanbul). This analysis focused on specific aspects of Turkey’s foreign policy; however, the general pattern has been for the AKP to seek to strengthen ties with Islamic inspired parties such as the Iraqi Islamic Muslim Party (IIP), Hamas and affiliated Muslim Brotherhood parties. Another tactic has been for Turkey to position itself as a neutral mediator between warring parties (e.g. Israel and Hamas) to seek to offer a neutral Islamic view.

In 2010, Davutoğlu laid out his vision for Turkish foreign policy, by outlining six defining guidelines in line with his earlier theories of Strategic Depth:⁶⁶

- **The first principle** is to strike a balance between freedom and security. If security is good for one nation and for an individual, it is also good for others. We should not maintain security to the detriment of freedoms and vice-versa; therefore, we need to find an appropriate balance between them.

⁶⁵ Behlül Özkan, “Turkey, Davutoğlu and the Idea of Pan-Islamism,” 119-140.

⁶⁶ It is probably no coincidence that in laying out his vision, Davutoğlu stated six principles, noting that Atatürk expressed his vision using a similar six principles concept. This could be interpreted as the AKP’s attempt to fundamentally roll back the Kemalist doctrine.

- **The second principle** envisions an enhanced regional engagement. We pursue a policy of “zero problems” in our neighborhood. We believe that this is an achievable goal, if enough trust and confidence can be generated among the relevant parties.
- **The third principle** envisions an effective diplomacy towards neighboring regions. Our goal is to maximize cooperation and mutual benefits with all of our neighbors. In order to achieve that goal, we build our relations with them on the principles of “security for all,” “high-level political dialogue,” “economic interdependence” and “cultural harmony and mutual respect.”
- **The fourth principle** is that Turkey seeks complementarity with global actors.
- **Our fifth principle** is the effective use of international forums and new initiatives in order to galvanize action on matters of common concern.
- **The sixth and final principle** of our foreign policy is to create a “new perception of Turkey” through an increased focus on public diplomacy.⁶⁷

The period 2002 to 2011 was thus marked by the AKP’s use of elements of Davutoğlu’s Strategic Depth concept, blended with more traditional Turkish policy choices of non-interference (i.e. what has been referred to as ‘Benign Neglect’). This was the general pattern until late 2010 with the onset of the so-called ‘Arab Spring.’ Up until 2010, Turkish regional foreign policy towards those countries viewed as politically stable (Syria and Iran) was to strengthen economic and political ties. These efforts are generally recognized as having been successful.⁶⁸ In regions beset with political upheaval (e.g. Palestine and Iraq), the AKP sought to shape internal politics by backing religiously conservative political parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood. This is generally considered to have been a failure as the Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt did not survive for long and the Brotherhood has been unable to make inroads in Iraq or elsewhere in the region. The period 2011 to the present has been marked by a much more adventurous foreign security policy, characterised by more active involvement in regional affairs and culminating in the strategic

⁶⁷ Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Fostering a Culture of Harmony,” *Russia in Global Affairs*, 9 April 2010, accessed 19 January 2017, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_14784.

⁶⁸ Aaron Stein and Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies, *Turkey’s new foreign policy: Davutoğlu, the AKP and the pursuit of regional order* (London: Routledge, 2014), 32-33. Stein made a coherent argument that Turkey generally sought to maintain the status quo and had some notable foreign policy successes (outreach to Syria, and increase in trade with Iran) as well as some failures such as attempts at mediation in the ongoing Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

decision by the Turkish leadership to intervene in Syria in August 2016, despite having avoided becoming embroiled in the Syrian civil war for five years.

THE EXPORT OF TURKISH SOFT POWER

Turkey has made extensive use of its economic power to enable the delivery of foreign security policy. The Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı Başkanlığı/Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) was created in 1992, primarily as “a technical aid organization under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to respond to the restructuring, adaptation and development needs of the Turkic (Turkish-speaking) Republics after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.”⁶⁹ This approach clearly pre-dates the rise to power of the AKP and has been a key pillar of Turkish foreign policy that has survived relatively unscathed despite changes in the Turkish political scene. The size and scale of the export of Turkish soft power is considerable. The TIKA annual report for 2014 stated that “projects are undertaken by 50 Program Coordination Offices and also in 150 countries ranging from Central Asia and the Balkans to the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific Islands.”⁷⁰

Despite this type of activity pre-dating the AKP, the rapid expansion of TIKA activities can be explained by the subsequent adoption of Davutoğlu’s concept of ‘Strategic Depth’ which in principle number six sought to create a “new perception of Turkey.” As a result, Turkey is increasingly turning towards its neighboring regions in order to export influence and Turkish values. Against this policy aim, overseas development cooperation serves as a means for pursuing complementary foreign policy goals. Most of all, increasing foreign aid is intended to convey a positive image of Turkey to foreign populations. As a result, from 2003 to 2012 Turkish aid rose

⁶⁹ TIKA website, accessed 19 January 17, <http://www.tika.gov.tr/en>.

⁷⁰ TIKA Annual Report 2014, accessed 19 January 2017, http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/2016/INGILIZCE%20SITE%20ESERLER/FAAL%C4%B0YET%20RAPORLARI/PDFLER/FR2014_ENG.pdf.

from \$67 million to \$2.53 billion USD, a near fortyfold increase; Turkey's strong focus on bilateral aid is now a central pillar of delivering foreign security policy outcomes.⁷¹

Turkey's increased development assistance should be understood within the context of its foreign policy approach. Turkey's increased development assistance corresponded to the foreign policy principle of public diplomacy as formulated by Davutoğlu that is intended to convey a positive image of the country to the foreign public.⁷² Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs explicitly set the creation of a more peaceful and more stable environment in its neighboring regions as an over-arching goal of its own development cooperation meaning that development cooperation directly serves the implementation of the 'Zero Problems Policy.' Poverty reduction and the promotion of sustainable development are viewed as a means for moving closer to the goals of peace and stability and so aid the delivery of foreign security policy is aligned with overseas aid. A good example of Turkey's move to align foreign security goals with development activity is provided by Turkey's extensive involvement in Somalia. Turkey has a large footprint in the country and is building schools, providing scholarships, refurbishing government buildings, and rendering budget support of approximately \$4.5 million USD a month.⁷³ Turkey's expanding role in Somalia is viewed as a success story by the Somalis, who have both recognized the benefits that Turkish investment has brought.⁷⁴ Then President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mahamud was clear about the value of Turkish aid when he stated in 2013:

The Turkish model in Somalia is very, very clear... They said we want to do this thing in Somalia, and they do it. They are there. They come there, starting from their top leadership, the prime minister of the country with his family, the rest, deputy prime minister, ministries... They are building or implementing projects that are really tangible ones...

⁷¹ Jeannine Hausmann, "Turkey as a Donor Country and Potential Partner in Triangular Cooperation," *German Development Institute*, December 2014, accessed 19 January 2017, http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2015/5599/pdf/DP_14.2014.pdf.

⁷² Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik (Strategic Depth)* (Istanbul: Kure Yayinlari, 2001), 128.

⁷³ Ahmed Ali, "Turkish aid in Somalia: the irresistible appeal of boots on the ground," *Guardian online*, 30 September 2013, accessed 19 January 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/sep/30/turkey-aid-somalia-aid-effectiveness>.

⁷⁴ Laura Pitel, "Somalia reaps rewards of Ankara's investment," *Financial Times online*, 24 May 2016, accessed 19 January 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/bae31b04-fa6f-11e5-8f41-df5bda8beb40>.

They are doing the work there. They are driving their own cars. They are moving the city. They are building. They are teaching. They are – and there are a number of clinics that provide a free service to the people in Mogadishu alone. They are doing the same thing – they started doing the same thing in Puntland and Somaliland... Today Mogadishu is cleaner because of the support of the Turkish. They provided the garbage collection trucks and everything and the city is cleaner today.⁷⁵

In line with the AKP's vision of using Islam as a unifying factor among Muslim countries, Turkey has also sponsored an extensive mosque building program in several countries. Starting in March 2015, Turkey began building 18 large mosques, including one in Tirana, Albania, that will hold more than 4,000 worshippers. Mosques are also being built in the United States, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the Palestinian Territories and Somalia.⁷⁶ The *Diyanet*, Turkey's religious affairs ministry, has also become an important means of enabling foreign security policy. Since 2006, the *Diyanet* budget has increased fourfold, to 5.4 billion lira (just over \$2 billion USD). The *Diyanet's* share of Turkish government spending has increased by about a third and its staff has doubled, to nearly 150,000. Its budget allocation in 2015 was 40 percent more than the Ministry of the Interior's and equal to those of the Foreign, Energy, and Culture and Tourism ministries combined.⁷⁷

Turkey's use of overseas aid, export of its version of Sunni Islam and a powerful sense of its place in the world driven by the memory of Ottoman history are proving an effective means to influence Muslim states far from Turkey. Western states such as the United States and Germany have therefore expressed an opinion that they can rely on Turkey to act as a counterweight to other nation states such as The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is exporting a version of Sunni Islam (based on Wahhabi interpretations) which is not in line with western security goals.

⁷⁵ Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud, Speech delivered at CSIS "The Future of Governance in Somalia," 17 January 2013, accessed 6 March 2017, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/attachments/130117_HassanSheikhMahamud_transcript.pdf, 18-19.

⁷⁶ David Lapeska, "Turkey Casts the Diyanet," *Foreign Affairs*, 17 May 2015, accessed 19 January 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2015-05-17/turkey-casts-diyamet>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

REGIONAL ACTORS

Turkey's immediate neighbors of Iran, Syria and Iraq all have vested and interconnected interests with the execution of Turkish foreign policy. Through direct support of organizations such as the Kurdistan Workers Party (i.e. PKK) and by offering means such as direct financing and the provision of sanctuary, the PKK has acted as the proxy of other regional powers (Syria and Iran) who have all sought to further their own regional interests at the expense of Turkey. Syria, Iran and Iraq are also concerned with their own Kurdish populations and what Kurdish autonomy inside Turkey could mean for them. Maintaining a local balance of power in their favor, and containing pro-western influences evident in the Turkish state has been to their historical advantage.

IRAQ 2002-2017

Turkish interests in Iraq are multifaceted, but are primarily driven by the desire to improve economic ties, ensure that Kurdish groups do not gain too much power and autonomy and for ethnic Turkmen to be protected inside Iraq. The prospect of a Kurdish nation—the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)—emerging as an autonomous region within Iraq and possibly an independent state is viewed as an existential threat to the unitary nature of the Republic of Turkey.⁷⁸ This is because it could encourage the PKK to once again press for autonomy or outright independence from Turkey, a claim that was previously renounced by Öcalan in 1999.

Turkey is intensely interested in the treatment of the Turkmen ethnic group, with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) website stating: “Turkey continuously communicates with Iraqi authorities regarding the problems faced by Iraqi Turkmen. Turkey always reiterates that, Iraqi Turkmen, who are inseparable part of the Iraqi society, should be represented more in

⁷⁸ Bill Park, and International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Turkey's policy towards northern Iraq: Problems and perspectives* (New York; London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005), 12.

their country's governing bodies.”⁷⁹ Having a significant Turkmen minority inside Iraq is of course convenient for Turkey, as it provides an excuse, in the name of ‘protecting’ Turkemans, for Turkey to intervene in the KRI. Turkey's involvement in the KRI is also somewhat hypocritical in light of Davutoğlu's repeated criticism of western powers use of the concept of ethnic nationalism to maintain borders in the region. Turkey is content to use the presence of Turkmen in northern Iraq to curb Kurdish territorial ambitions, while securing its own borders, by harnessing the very same ethnic nationalism to further its own ends. The Turkish Army's ongoing deployment to Baashika (near Mosul), a unilateral deployment outside of the US—led Operation Inherent Resolve coalition, remains a major point of contention between Turkey and Iraq and is a classic example of this type of Turkish behavior. Turkey's relationship with the Massoud Barzani led Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) is very strong, but the presence of a 2,000 strong Turkish Army contingent in Baashika in the KRG in northern Iraq where they are purportedly training local militia to combat Daesh has caused continuing friction between the two governments. Iraq maintains that the Turkish presence is illegal, while Turkey maintains that their forces are there at the behest of KRG authority.⁸⁰

This crisis came to a head in October 2016, when Iraq threatened military action against Turkish forces, with Iraqi Prime Minister Abadi calling the Turkish troops “an occupying force...risking a regional war.” The Barzani led KRG had agreed to the Turkish troops' presence, but not the central Baghdad government.⁸¹ However, from the Turkish point of view, a strong

⁷⁹ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Relations between Turkey-Iraq,” undated, accessed 19 January 2017, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-iraq.en.mfa>.

⁸⁰ “Turkish PM Yildirim visits Iraq to mend relations,” *Al Jazeera*, 8 January 2017, accessed 19 January 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/turkish-pm-yildirim-visits-iraq-mend-relations-170108111350047.html>.

⁸¹ Mark Lowen, “Battle for Mosul: A row between Turkey and Iraq could derail the offensive,” *BBC Turkey*, 13 October 2016, accessed 19 January 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37629577>.

presence in northern Iraq, it's near abroad, is an essential part of its security strategy to counter the PKK and allied groups.

Economic ties are also a vital security interest to Turkey. In 2015, Iraq was the third largest export partner of Turkey with a share of 5.9% (\$8.56 billion USD) of total exports. Given the faltering Turkish economy, strong economic links and exports with Iraq remains a top priority.⁸² Excluding the oil sector, Turkey is the largest commercial investor in Iraq. Turkey's Trade Ministry estimates that the trade volume between Turkey and Iraq exceeded \$6 billion USD in 2010, up from only \$940 million USD in 2003, boosting Iraq's position from Turkey's tenth largest trade partner to the fifth largest. Ceyhan, on Turkey's Mediterranean coast of Turkey, is the terminus for a pipeline that transports crude oil from fields around Kirkuk in northern Iraq, which accounts for about a third of Iraq's total crude exports.⁸³ Turkey's economic ties with the KRG are even closer, with Turkey exporting circa \$8 billion USD in goods and services to the region in 2013, or 67% of total revenue.⁸⁴

The continuing battle for Mosul is of critical interest to Turkish foreign policy. Turkey is determined not to lose its influence over Mosul, which has a large ethnic Turkmen population. Erdoğan has had difficult relations with the Shia-led government of Haider Al-Abadi and has taken umbrage at the prospect that Shia militias could play a larger role in the ongoing Mosul offensive. The Turkish prime minister, Binali Yıldırım has also warned against "any forceful change in the demographic composition of the region."⁸⁵

⁸² Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Relations between Turkey-Iraq," 2011, accessed 19 January 2017, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-iraq.en.mfa>.

⁸³ Hasan Turunc, "Turkey and Iraq," *London School of Economics*, May 2011, accessed 19 January 2017, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/SR007.aspx>.

⁸⁴ Soner Çağaptay, Christina Bache Fidan, and Ege Cansu Saçıkara, "Turkey and the KRG signs of booming economic ties," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, May 2015, accessed 19 January 2017, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/infographics/TurkeyKRGSignsofBoomingEconomicTies2.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Mark Lowen, "Battle for Mosul: A row between Turkey and Iraq could derail the offensive", *BBC Turkey*, 13 October 2016, accessed 19 January 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37629577>.

The major security issue for Turkey in Iraq relates to the alignment of Kurdish militias. Turkey sees the PKK in Turkey and the YPG PKK offshoot in Syria as terrorists. As a counter, Turkey has strong relations with the KRG government, and has facilitated oil exports from the KRG through Turkey. Turkey is therefore determined to keep any Kurdish militia forces allied to the PKK out of the ongoing operation to liberate Mosul. Metin Gurcan, a military analyst and columnist for *Al-Monitor* sums up Turkey's policy choices in Iraq succinctly: "Ankara is trying to create a Sunni power center in northern Iraq—a sort of 'Sunnistan'—through the KRG and Sunni tribes...fighting for local dominance with sub-national armed actors. But it's playing in a room full of glass and with two elephants: the United States and Russia. Turkey must work with the U.S. as a NATO member. But on a political and diplomatic level, it's trying to align with Russia—and that creates a dangerous split."⁸⁶

Iraq is therefore of vital interest to the delivery of Turkish security policy and the overall Turkish economy. Turkey, which considers northern Iraq as part of its natural hinterland, finds itself engaged in a delicate balancing act between the central Baghdad government, the Barzani led KRG and the ambitions of other Kurdish groups who have aligned themselves with PKK affiliated groups such as the YPG. Turkey has achieved notable successes in the KRG by aligning with the Barzanis, however; this is at the risk of fracturing its relationship with the Abadi led government. By backing the KRG and focusing on trade, while simultaneously ensuring that the Turkmen minority is protected via the deployment of a sizable Turkish military contingent, Turkey is engaged in delivering a difficult set of security policy choices, but has no other realistic alternatives given the complicated nature of Iraq.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

SYRIA 2002-2017

Until the Syrian civil war broke out in March 2011, maintaining cordial relations with Syria was a top priority of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East. However, Turkey's relationship with Syria has historically been difficult. Syria's close relationship with the Soviet Union and then Russia has always provoked apathy from Turkey's leadership. Syrian support for the PKK until 1998 further strained relations, with Turkey blaming the Syrian regime for the deaths of many Turkish soldiers in the protracted fight against the PKK. In 1998, the Syrian regime of Hafez Al-Assad determined that its relationship with Turkey was more important than any leverage gained by supporting the PKK, so decided on a policy of political rapprochement with Turkey. This culminated in the signing of the Adana accords on 20 October 1998.⁸⁷

The election of the AKP in 2002 ensured that improving relations with Syria became a priority, given the economic interdependence between the two nations. This was an interesting Turkish policy choice given that the Syrian Ba'athist ideology at the time favored secular Arab nationalism, rather than Islam as the bulwark of political legitimacy. The unlikely rapprochement with the Ba'athist's was, however, perfectly rational given Davutoğlu's concept of Strategic Depth. Davutoğlu in his earlier thesis had argued that the Cold War's bipolar order was one of the reasons for the successful spread of the Ba'athist ideology in Syria, as the United States and Soviet Union encouraged proxies to serve their wider interests in the Middle East. With the end of the Cold War and its governing framework, Davutoğlu postulated that there was an opportunity for rapprochement using shared Islamic values and associated political and economic ties to regulate Syrian behavior.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Relations between Turkey-Syria," 2011, accessed 19 January 2017, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey%E2%80%93syria.en.mfa>.

⁸⁸ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik (Strategic Depth)* (Istanbul: Kure Yayinlari, 2001), 362-363.

Turkey's foreign policy towards Syria, driven in many ways by recognition that there were limits to Turkish political, economic and military power, therefore sought to focus on improving relations with the Assad regime. In doing so, Turkish policymakers aimed to garner political moderation and mutual benefit from Assad as a byproduct.⁸⁹ Davutoğlu clearly assessed that improved Turkish political and economic ties with Syria would reconnect Turkish businesses in southern Anatolia with its natural and historical hinterland in and around Aleppo province.⁹⁰ A key shared interest of Turkey and Syria remained to prevent the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in Iraq at any costs, given the impact this could have on restive Kurdish populations in both Turkey and Syria. This was especially the case after the successful US invasion of Iraq in 2003, given the close ties established between the KRG and the United States.

Despite these intense efforts, Turkey's rapprochement with Syria ultimately failed. When protests began against the Assad regime in 2011, Erdoğan urged Assad to adopt a more moderate approach to avoid conflict. Assad chose to ignore his advice and launched a campaign of increasing brutality that quickly escalated into a full blown civil war. Erdoğan was outraged when Syrian air defenses shot down a Turkish Air Force RF4-E Phantom II reconnaissance aircraft on 22 June 2012. As a result, Turkey rapidly cut all diplomatic ties and ever since has stridently called for Assad's removal as a pre-condition for any peace settlement. Despite the effort that Turkish policymakers expended on improving relationships with Syria, the Assad regime looked to other countries for support (Russia and Iran) with the result that Turkey's influence became minimal. Turkey's security goals have thus not been realized and the Syrian conflict is now in its sixth year.

⁸⁹ Owen Mathews, "Davutoğlu: Inside Turkey's new foreign policy," *Newsweek*, 28 November 2009, accessed 20 January 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/davutoglu-inside-turkeys-new-foreign-policy-76677>.

⁹⁰ Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, 372.

COUNTER DAESH ACTIVITY 2014-2017

US support for the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (Kurdish: *Yekîneyên Parastina Gel*, popularly known as the YPG) in the counter-Daesh fight in Syria has placed US policymakers at odds with their Turkish counterparts. Turkey has always been most concerned in Syria that the Syrian Kurds would seek to carve out an independent Kurdish autonomous region—Rojava as it is commonly referred to—with serious consequences for the internal security situation inside Turkey. Turkey continues to fight a protracted insurgency against the PKK, so Turkish policymakers have every right to be concerned at this prospect, given the acknowledged close links between the YPG and PKK.⁹¹ To halt the seemingly unstoppable march of Daesh in late 2014, US policymakers sought to encourage Turkey to enter the fray to bring its considerable military resources to bear against the group.⁹² However, as the siege of Kobanî in late summer 2014 aptly demonstrated, Turkish policymakers, including Erdoğan, refused to commit Turkish military power to further Kurdish aims in their quest for establishing Rojava.

Turkish policy towards Daesh has been opaque, with persistent intelligence surfacing that Turkey has provided a degree of at least tacit support to the group to act as a counterbalance to the US supported YPG. In many ways, Turkish support for Daesh as a proxy to counter the YPG mirrors the Pakistani approach, where the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) has allegedly supported the Afghan Taliban to maintain balance in the region.⁹³ The journalist Patrick Cockburn has gone on record that there is “strong evidence for a degree of collaboration” between the Turkish

⁹¹ Former Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter, *Hearing before the Senate Armed Services Select Committee, testimony on Counter-ISIL (Islamic State Of Iraq and The Levant) Operations and Middle East Strategy*, 114th Cong, 2d session, 28 April 2016, accessed 01 April 2017, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/16-51_04-28-16.pdf, 99. During this testimony, then Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter admitted to Senator Lindsey Graham (R—South Carolina) that the YPG and PKK have close ties.

⁹² Steven A. Cook, “Between Ankara and Rojava,” *Foreign Affairs*, 14 March 2016, accessed December 14 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2016-03-14/between-ankara-and-rojava>.

⁹³ BBC News, “Pakistani agents ‘funding and training Afghan Taliban’” 13 June 2010, accessed 4 March 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/10302946>.

intelligence services and Daesh, although the “exact nature of the relationship ... remains cloudy.”⁹⁴ There have also been corroborated reports by Daesh fighters that the Turkish military has provided logistical and medical support and allowed free movement across the Turkish/Syria border, at least until the Paris attacks in November 2015. Daesh fighters have stated that they were essentially given free rein by the Turkish security forces: “ISIS commanders told us to fear nothing at all because there was full cooperation with the Turks...ISIS saw the Turkish army as its ally especially when it came to attacking the Kurds in Syria.”⁹⁵ There has also been persistent evidence that Turkey has allowed foreign fighters free passage to travel through Turkey to join Daesh and other Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) inside Syria.

The US Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, when asked during a Congressional hearing in March 2015 if he was optimistic that Turkey would do more in the fight against the Daesh stated: “No, I’m not...I think Turkey has other priorities and other interests.” Clapper went on to state during the same testimony that public opinion polls in Turkey show that Turks do not see Daesh as a primary threat; polls consistently show that Kurdish terrorism is the population’s main concern.⁹⁶ Clapper’s analysis concluded with his belief that Turkey is more concerned with opposing Kurdish autonomy within Syria than in fighting Daesh.⁹⁷ Some 18 months later, even after the Turkish intervention into northern Syria to purportedly defeat Daesh, this trend has continued.

⁹⁴ Patrick Cockburn, “Whose side is Turkey on?” *London Review of Books*, 36 (21): 8–10, (6 November 2014), accessed 11 Jan 17, <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n21/patrick-cockburn/whose-side-is-turkey-on>.

⁹⁵ “ISIS Sees Turkey as Its Ally: Former Islamic State Member Reveals Turkish Army Cooperation,” *Newsweek*, 7 November 2014, accessed 11 January 17, <http://www.newsweek.com/isis-and-turkey-cooperate-destroy-kurds-former-isis-member-reveals-turkish-282920?rx=us>.

⁹⁶ Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM), “Public Opinion Surveys of Turkish Foreign Policy 2013/3, accessed 6 March 2017, <http://www.edam.org.tr/en/File?id=85>.

⁹⁷ Tim Arango and Eric Schmitt, “A Path to ISIS, through a Porous Turkish Border,” *New York Times*, 9 March 2015, accessed 11 January 17, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/10/world/europe/despote-crackdown-path-to-join-isis-often-winds-through-porous-turkish-border.html?_r=1.

In a major departure from previous Turkish foreign security policy and perhaps driven by the July 2016 coup attempt, Turkish security forces launched Operation EUPHRATES SHIELD on 24 August 2016. Turkey declared it was exercising its right of self-defense, as codified under the UN Charter Article 51, to justify the launch of the operation. The intervention into Syria caught many observers by surprise, although the operation had been in the offing for upwards of twelve months, but continually delayed due to concerns with the quality of Free Syrian Army forces that were scheduled to take part. In comparison to the previous reluctance to intervene militarily in the region, the operation is a stark departure from previous Turkish foreign policy. However, after the 15 July 2016 coup attempt, it seems clear that Erdoğan is determined to exercise greater control over the military, who were reportedly strongly opposed to the Syrian incursion.⁹⁸

The operation has not gone as planned. Although rapid gains were made with the key towns of Jarabulus and Dabiq captured before late December 2016, progress since then towards the key intermediate objective of Al-Bab has been slow. Daesh has put up stiff resistance and up to February 2017, 65 Turkish soldiers have been killed. In addition, Turkish forces are operating in close proximity to Russian, Syrian Army and Syrian government allied militias, which despite claims of close cooperation between Turkey and Russia for the operation, has resulted in a number of casualties due to so called 'friendly fire.'⁹⁹ It would seem that Erdoğan is now committed to see the operation through to its conclusion, however long this may take.

ISRAEL 2002-2017

Israel has generally proved to be a key ally for Turkey. Given their similar security outlooks, both states have generally worked together to forge a political and military cooperative in

⁹⁸ Tim Arango, "With Operation in Syria, Erdogan Shows His New Power over Turkey's Military," *New York Times*, 25 August 2016, accessed 11 January 17, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/26/world/europe/turkey-tanks-syria.html>.

⁹⁹ "Syria war: Russian 'friendly fire' kills Turkish soldiers," *BBC News*, 9 February 2017, accessed 13 February 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38919426>.

the region. For Turkey, Israel has been a reliable supplier of weapons that did not ask too many questions about how they were used. Israel certainly did not tie sales of these weapons to improving human rights as the United States and other European nations did. Middle East scholar Efraim Inbar noted “This partnership is characteristic of two satisfied (non-revisionist) powers cooperating primarily to preserve the regional status quo and to fend off common threats.”¹⁰⁰

With the seemingly successful renewing of ties with Syria in 1998, this prompted the AKP led government in 2002 to attempt to mediate in other more pressing regional conflicts such as the perpetual Israeli—Palestinian stalemate and the wider competition for scarce resources in the region such as water rights. By seeking to mediate as an honest Islamic state broker, Davutoğlu and the AKP led foreign policy establishment sought to place Turkey at the geopolitical center of the region, in line with Davutoğlu’s wider foreign policy vision.

This policy of Turkish facilitated mediation failed. Despite strenuous efforts by then Prime Minister Erdoğan, ultimately mediation between Syria and Israel was unsuccessful. Several key summits between Israel and Syria over the Palestinian issue made some progress. However, a surge in violence in the Gaza strip in December 2008 resulted in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launching Operation CAST LEAD to defeat Hamas in situ. Erdoğan, despite having good relations with the then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, felt slighted by the IDF’s incursion into Gaza, despite his pleas not to do so. Erdoğan, incensed at what had been construed as implicit Turkish involvement with the IDF incursion into Gaza stated “today, I was planning to call Israeli Prime Minister Olmert regarding Syria-Israeli talks but I cancelled it. I am not calling because it is also disrespectful [the IDF incursion into Gaza] to us. We are a country which has been working for

¹⁰⁰ Efraim Inbar, “Turkey’s New Strategic Partner Israel,” in *Dangerous Neighborhood*, ed. Michael Radu (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2003), 171.

peace.”¹⁰¹ On 28 December 2008, Syria suspended its involvement in further peace talks with Israel.

Israeli/Turkish relations suffered a near fatal blow after the *Mavi Mara* flotilla incident on 31 May 2010 when Israeli naval commandos from the elite unit *Shayetet 13* killed ten Turkish activists on board a Turkish civilian registered ship that was part of an aid flotilla attempting to breach the blockade of Gaza. In the immediate aftermath of the raid, Turkey withdrew its ambassador from Tel Aviv and then Prime Minister Erdoğan called for Israel to be punished for its “bloody massacre.” Joint military exercises were also cancelled. It took until June 2016 for Turkey and Israel to normalize relations, after both sides agreed to compromise on compensation and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu apologized to Turkey.¹⁰²

IRAN 2002-2017

Iranian interests have historically centered on keeping Turkish ambitions in the Trans-Caucases in check, preventing the expansion of destabilizing “western ways” deeper into the Middle East and Iran’s sphere of influence and to prevent the emergence of another Sunni power (in addition to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia). The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 placed Turkey and Iran in competition to win influence in the newly independent Caucasus, resulting in both sides backing insurgent movements to balance each other. Both the PKK and Iraqi Kurds benefited greatly from Iranian support at the height of the PKK insurgency in the 1990s along with Iranian financial support and provision of critically needed materiel to prosecute their insurgency. Believing that Turkey was instrumental in funding the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK), a paramilitary movement residing in Iraqi territory committed to re-establishing a non-fundamentalist regime in

¹⁰¹ Paul Schemm, “Arab World Condemns Israeli Attack on Gaza”, *Associated Press*, 27 December 2008.

¹⁰² “*Mavi Marmara*: Why did Israel stop the Gaza flotilla?” *BBC News*, 27 June 2016, accessed 14 February 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/10203726>.

Iran, supporting the PKK acted as a form of retribution.¹⁰³ Iranian policies towards these ends were not without contradictions. Seeking to keep its own Kurdish population firmly in check, full Kurdish independence within Turkey was not Iran's objective. The aim of Iranian support to the PKK was essentially a negative one. Though not desirous of a PKK victory, internal agitation would keep the Turkish state off-balance and focused away from Iranian interests.¹⁰⁴

Trade continues to be of vital importance to both nations. In 2015, it accounted for \$3.62 billion USD of Turkish trade or 9.77% of the total; however, it should be noted that this is significantly down from 2011 when it accounted for \$3.59 billion USD or 16.05%. Despite this fall, Turkey has played a significant part in providing the Iranian exchequer sorely needed foreign currency, especially while western sanctions were in place that were designed to curb Iranian nuclear ambitions.¹⁰⁵

Since the start of the Syrian civil war, Turkish and Iranian interests have sharply diverged. Iran has backed the Assad regime with every means at its disposal and has co-opted Lebanese Hezbollah into supporting the Assad regime. Erdoğan, by stridently calling for Assad's removal, has essentially limited his negotiation space and relations with Iran have suffered accordingly. Despite this, trade between the two countries remains a vital interest and likely acts as a moderating influence on foreign policy.

US FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON TURKEY 2002-2017

The United States has long been a staunch supporter of Turkey, despite the political upheavals and long standing military dominance of Turkish government from the 1940s to the late 1990s. Turkey is viewed as an essential ally in the region and has risen in importance given the

¹⁰³ Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 95.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Economic and Commercial Relations with Iran," undated, accessed 6 March 2017, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/economic-and-commercial-relations-with-iran.en.mfa>.

ongoing conflict versus Daesh. The US Embassy mission in Turkey is stated as:

The goal is to promote the objectives and protect the interests of the United States and its citizens in the Republic of Turkey. We strive to represent the United States in a way that will make the American taxpayer proud...in addition, the U.S. speaks out in Turkey for enhanced democracy and for the protection of human rights. We work for better relations between Turkey and Greece and for a just and durable settlement of the Cyprus question. The United States and Turkey also work together to fight terrorism; to pursue peace in the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus; to fight drug trafficking and money laundering; to bring Caspian basin oil and gas to world markets via pipelines through Turkey; and to maintain close defense cooperation.¹⁰⁶

Analysis of this mission statement provides some interesting contrasts. The U.S. has been Turkey's main supporter on three core foreign policy issues over the last thirty years: EU membership, the Caspian oil pipeline, and the campaign against the PKK.¹⁰⁷ Since 2001, Turkey is supported as a main line of defense against Islamic extremism and at least prior to the latest coup attempt in July 2016, held up as a model for what a democratic state might have looked like pre-Arab Spring. Turkey has continued to demonstrate its value to the United States by its strong support against trans-regional terrorism of all hues and has been rewarded with extensive Foreign Military Sales (FMS).¹⁰⁸ Turkey was also the only Islamic nation to join the US operation in Afghanistan under NATO. Though Turkish public opinion was 80% against committing Turkish forces, Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit justified his government's decision: "by noting that having fought terrorism for so long [against the PKK], Turkey would have denied itself if it chose to opt out of this war."¹⁰⁹ Maintaining a close relationship with the United States has somewhat mitigated the effects of continuing problems experienced with the EU regarding accession. Masking the campaign against the PKK under the auspices of the ongoing fight against Islamic inspired Violent

¹⁰⁶ US Embassy Turkey website, accessed 14 December 16, <https://tr.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/ankara/mission/>.

¹⁰⁷ Stephen F. Larrabee, "U.S. and European Policy Towards Turkey and the Caspian Basin," in *Allies Divided: Transatlantic Policies for the Greater Middle East*, eds R.D. Blackwill and M. Sturmer (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 152.

¹⁰⁸ Defense Security and Cooperation Agency (DSCA). Turkey homepage, accessed 14 February 2017, <http://www.dsca.mil/tags/turkey>.

¹⁰⁹ Birol A. Yesilada, "Turkish-U.S. Relations," in *Dangerous Neighborhood*, ed. Michael S. Radu (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2003), 193.

Extremist Organisations has also provided the Turkish government with an added degree of legitimacy to its efforts.

US policy has so far been ineffective in realizing an enduring solution to the Cyprus issue. With the rejection of the last settlement proposals in 2015, further negotiations between Mustafa Akinci, elected President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in April 2016 and Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades have yet to yield tangible results.¹¹⁰ While familiar issues remain such as restoration of Greek Cypriot property rights predating the Turkish intervention in 1974, new issues such as ownership of energy rights and Turkish mainland provision of electricity and water to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have now come to the fore. Ongoing disagreements over energy exploration in the region threatens to completely undermine U.S. efforts to broker a lasting settlement as in the latest round of licensing for off shore oil and gas fields, Turkey has already claimed that several of the blocks auctioned by the Republic of Cyprus lie within Turkey's Exclusive Economic Zone.¹¹¹ These issues, plus a continued AKP sponsored program to export Turkey's specific brand of Sunni Islam via an extensive mosque building program in the inherently secular Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, promise more friction in the coming years.

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY IMPACT ON TURKEY 2002-2017

Russian foreign policy towards Turkey has generally been cooperative since the rise of Erdoğan and the AKP to power, although there is a long history of antagonism driven by competition for resources in the region.¹¹² Turkey's relationship with Russia has, over the past fifteen years, been built on economic cooperation, shared distrust of the western-dominated international order, and the personal chemistry of Vladimir Putin and Erdoğan. However, this

¹¹⁰ Jonathan Gorvett, "One Cyprus?" *Foreign Affairs*, 27 October 2016, accessed 14 December 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/cyprus/2016-10-27/one-cyprus>.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Jeffrey Mankoff, "Why Russia and Turkey Fight," *Foreign Affairs*, 24 February 2016, accessed 17 January 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2016-02-24/why-russia-and-turkey-fight>.

fifteen year Russo-Turkish entente is in many ways an historical anomaly.¹¹³

Since 2002, and born of strategic necessity, both countries have focused on deepening economic cooperation. As a result, Russia refused asylum to PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and cancelled the sale of the S-300 air defense systems to Greek Cyprus, a red line for Turkey. A 2001 agreement addressed the tensions between the countries over the Caucasus and Central Asia. Under a January 2002 agreement, Russia withdrew support for the PKK while Turkey adopted a harder line on Chechen and other North Caucasus terrorist groups operating from Turkey.

With these strategic tensions eased, economic links between Russia and Turkey dramatically increased. By 2008, Russia was Turkey's single largest trading partner. Energy imports have been the most important component of this strengthened economic relationship. Turkey has few oil reserves and imported more than 60% of its oil from Russia in 2009 (although this number has since drastically reduced). Russia still supplies Turkey with about 57 percent of its natural gas. Economic ties also extended to nuclear power, construction, tourism, and other sectors as well.¹¹⁴

Enabling this Russo-Turkish reconciliation was growing estrangement from the West and the strong personal rapport between Putin and Erdoğan, who both opposed the US—led invasion of Iraq. For Russia, renewed NATO expansion and the so-called color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine revived fears that the West (i.e. the United States) was seeking to reduce Russian influence in Russia's natural hinterland. For Turkey, the stalling of EU accession talks, coupled with the admission into the EU of Greek Cyprus (i.e. the Republic of Cyprus) despite its rejection of a UN-sponsored peace plan deepened Turkey's angst. Turkey and Russia also sought to position

¹¹³ Bülent Gökay, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 1920-1991: Soviet Foreign Policy, Turkey, and Communism* (Routledge: London and New York, 2006), 11. Gökay provides a good analysis of the dynamics between the fledgling Turkish and Russian states. The period 1919-1923 was marked by good relations between the two countries as they struggled for independence, however, once both states secured their positions, competition for influence and power with the region saw their interests to diverge.

¹¹⁴ Mankoff, "Why Russia and Turkey Fight."

themselves as intermediaries between the West and Tehran over Iran's nuclear program. Finally, Turkey also took a relatively accommodating stance over Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia.¹¹⁵

Since 2011, the Russian-Turkish marriage of convenience has faltered as geopolitics and differing foreign security policy aims have collided. Conflicts in the Caucasus, Ukraine, and the Middle East have all left Russia and Turkey at loggerheads, reducing Turkey's security and margin for action. Russia's annexation of Crimea has fundamentally altered the balance of power in and around the Black Sea, with Russia since bolstering its maritime and anti-access/area denial capabilities around the Crimea peninsula. Thus, Turkey now faces the prospect of strategic encirclement by an updated and operationally experienced Russian Black Sea Fleet. In addition, mounting tensions along the Nagorno-Karabakh Line of Contact (LoC) and the Armenia–Azerbaijan border threatens to pull Russia and Turkey into a proxy conflict. Russia's efforts to move Azerbaijan away from its energy-driven alignment with Turkey and the European Union have increased tensions.¹¹⁶

By far the biggest rift with Russia has been caused by the ongoing civil war in Syria. For Turkey, Syria has turned into a prolonged proxy war. From the outset, Turkey has sought to remove Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and to achieve this has supported Sunni rebel groups that Russia has labeled terrorists. This has proved problematic given the weakness of the Syrian opposition, meaning that Turkish support has not been translated into meaningful military or political gains. Turkey has been unable to articulate a sensible vision for what a post-Assad Syria might look like. Russia (along with Iran) has provided the Syrian regime with generous support, including via the

¹¹⁵ Bulent Aliriza, "Turkey and the Crisis in the Caucasus," *Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*, 9 September 2008, accessed 6 March 2017, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/media/csis/pubs/080909_aliriza_caucuses.pdf. On 2 September 2008, in a clear piece of *realpolitik*, Erdoğan (Prime Minister at the time) stated: "It would not be right for Turkey to be pushed toward any side. Certain circles want to push Turkey into a corner either with the United States or Russia after the Georgian incident. One of the sides is our closest ally, the United States. The other side is Russia, with which we have an important trade volume. We would act in line with what Turkey's national interests require."

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

direct military intervention launched on 30 September 2015, which has proved to be a decisive turning point in the conflict. Turkey's policy towards Syria has generally been viewed as an abject failure, with the PKK-linked Democratic Union Party (PYD) establishing a Kurdish proto-state on Turkey's southern border, even as the war with the PKK inside Turkey has been renewed with increased ferocity.

There is little chance of Turkish-Russian relationships returning to their pre-Syrian civil war level of consensus, despite the recent Turkey/Russia brokered ceasefire in Syria in January 2017 and reported wider cooperation. Russian and Turkish interests increasingly diverge in the Caucasus, the Black Sea, and the Middle East. The annexation of Crimea dramatically escalates the threat Turkey faces from the Black Sea, while the Syrian and Kurdish conflicts have created an unparalleled refugee problem and the opportunity for the Syrian Kurds to establish an autonomous region right on Turkey's southern border. This can but inflame the conflict with the PKK inside Turkey, especially with Russia providing direct support to the PKK aligned PYD.

TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION 2002-2017

EU integration has long been a goal for Turkish policymakers of the Kemalist stable. Stephen Larrabee concluded that "Ankara has seen full membership in the EU as a symbol of the successful completion of the Atatürk revolution."¹¹⁷ The drive to make this a reality has, in the past, caused the Turkish government to make substantial compromises and EU policies had a direct impact on Turkish governance and human rights legislation, including the methods it has used to prosecute the war against the PKK. However, Turkey's strategic positioning has not been enough to convince EU member states that Turkey should be admitted. Turkish unique selling points have included portraying itself as a stabilizing force on Europe's periphery and as the corridor for energy

¹¹⁷ Stephen F. Larrabee, *U.S. and European Policy Towards Turkey and the Caspian Basin*, 159.

resources flowing into Europe from the Caspian Sea and Central Asia.¹¹⁸ The EU's focus, however, is not on security or economics, but rather on human rights and how they were applied to its Kurdish minority.

Since 2001, Turkey implemented seven reform packages or "Harmonization Laws" to meet EU demands. To establish the baseline for EU human rights requirements, Turkey became a party to several human rights conventions. Most notable of these was the European Convention of Human Rights which incorporates the European Court of Human Rights (EHCR) as a binding judicial body on municipal law. Despite promising progress, Turkey-EU relations have remained fraught. During the period 2004-2007, a period when relations between the two entities were at a high point, Turkey's candidacy was still put on hold, due to the election of Angela Merkel in Germany, Nicolas Sarkozy in France and the accession of Cyprus to the EU in 2004. During 2007-2011, negotiations did not progress as quickly as Turkey had hoped, resulting in rising frustration among Turkish policymakers. This was not helped by the RoC refusing to allow a number of important chapters on Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, Energy and Education, in retaliation for Turkey's refusal to formally recognize the RoC.¹¹⁹ Since 2011, the refugee crisis emanating from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and large swathes of North Africa has been a driving factor in Turkey-EU relations.

The migration deal signed between Turkey and the EU appeared to be a seminal moment that might have ultimately paved the way for accession talks to get under way again in earnest. The deal, agreed on 18 March 2016, proposed: "to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU and replace it instead with legal channels of resettlement of refugees to the European Union. The

¹¹⁸ Inbar, "Turkey's New Strategic Partner: Israel," in *Dangerous Neighborhood*, ed. Michael S. Radu (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2003), 167.

¹¹⁹ Nicolas Watt, "David Cameron warns EU not to shut Turkey out," *The Guardian Online*, 26 July 2010, accessed 6 March 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/jul/27/david-cameron-turkey-european-union>.

aim is to replace disorganized, chaotic, irregular and dangerous migratory flows by organized, safe and legal pathways to Europe for those entitled to international protection in line with EU and international law.”¹²⁰ The scale of the problem, which President of the EU Jean-Claude Juncker described as a “Herculean task,” aims to return migrants who have illegally crossed into Greece from Turkey, in return for the EU lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016; this has still not occurred.¹²¹ The number of migrants crossing into Greece from Turkey in the latter parts of 2015 was unsustainable, which prompted the deal.¹²² The efficacy of the agreement has been repeatedly questioned and analysis of the statistics shows that the decline in the number of arrivals into Greece predates the EU-Turkey agreement; if the agreement had any effect, it was in fact to achieve an interruption of the decline of those seeking to gain entry to the EU as there was a spike in those trying to gain access before the deal was agreed.¹²³

The migrant deal has offered Turkey a powerful bargaining tool in its delivery of foreign policy in the region. In response to a non-binding vote by the European Parliament to freeze talks on EU membership for Turkey given the AKP government’s severe crackdown after the 15 July 2016 coup attempt, Erdoğan, on 25 November 2016, accused the EU of breaking its promises. As part of the March 2016 deal, Turkey was promised aid (€3 billion), visa-free travel for Turkish citizens and accelerated EU membership talks. Erdoğan, in a direct threat to EU policy makers stated, “Listen to me: these border gates will be opened if you go any further.”¹²⁴ Erdoğan, by

¹²⁰ “Implementing the EU-Turkey Statement - Questions and Answers,” *European Commission - Fact Sheet*, 15 June 2016, accessed 17 January 2017, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-1664_en.htm.

¹²¹ Chris Morris, “EU-Turkey migrant deal: A Herculean task,” *BBC News*, 18 Mar 2016, accessed 17 Jan 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-eu-35848181>.

¹²² “Implementing the EU-Turkey Statement – Questions and Answers,” *European Commission - Fact Sheet*. The total numbers of irregular arrivals from Turkey to Greece in September, October, November, December 2015, January and February 2016 were respectively 147,639, 214,792, 154,381, 104,399, 61,602 and 56,335 persons.

¹²³ Thomas Spijkerboer, “Fact Check: Did the EU-Turkey Deal Bring Down the Number of Migrants and of Border Deaths”? 28 Sep 2016, accessed 18 January 2017, *University of Oxford Faculty of Law*, <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2016/09/fact-check-did-eu>.

¹²⁴ “Migrant crisis: Turkey threatens EU with new surge,” *BBC News online*, 25 November 2016, accessed 18

resorting to such direct rhetoric, clearly aimed to make it clear that he would countenance reneging on the migrant deal, which would then flood Europe with migrants again. The migration deal is of vital importance to the EU and in particular Germany, which accepted nearly 1 million migrants in 2015. The acceptance of so many migrants has placed particularly heavy pressure on the Merkel led Christian Democrat Party (CDP) ruling coalition, to the point that Merkel may lose the chancellorship in the next round of state elections in July 2017.¹²⁵

Turkey currently hosts almost three million migrants and refugees, mostly from Syria, although the exact ethnic breakdown is difficult to ascertain. In 2015, more than one million migrants made their way to Europe, mainly via Turkey. Under the March 2016 agreement, migrants arriving in Greece are now sent back to Turkey if they do not apply for asylum or their claim is rejected. For each Syrian migrant returned to Turkey, the EU takes in another Syrian who has made a legitimate request. The deal to gain visa-free travel for Turkish citizens stalled when Turkey refused to change its anti-terror laws; many in Europe have also criticized Turkey's severe reaction to the failed July 2016 coup. These included High Representative Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn who stated they were “concerned” by Turkey’s decision to declare a state of emergency and that the measures imposed were “unacceptable.”¹²⁶

On 24 November 2016, the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly (479 votes in favor and 37 against, with 107 abstentions) to suspend Turkey’s EU membership talks because of the Turkish government’s crackdown since the coup attempt in July 2016. President Erdoğan, somewhat predictably stated that “Turkey should feel relaxed about the EU and not be fixated about

January 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38103375>.

¹²⁵ Jenny Hill, “Could this man be the next chancellor of Germany?” *BBC Berlin*, 24 February 2017, accessed 6 March 2017, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39067413?intlink_from_url=http://www.bbc.com/news/topics/bf922d40-1842-479d-a4bf-2ce36bdf1f94/german-federal-elections-2017&link_location=live-reporting-story. This story refers to Herr Martin Schulz (currently a Member of the European Parliament (MEP)). He is running neck and neck with the current German Chancellor, Angela Merkel for the post in the summer elections.

¹²⁶ “Turkey attempted coup: EU says measures ‘unacceptable’” *BBC News Europe*, 21 July 2016, accessed 18 January 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36861154>.

joining it.”¹²⁷ He also repeated the oft stated prospect of Turkey joining Russia and China in the Eurasian security group Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO), by stating “Why shouldn’t Turkey be in the Shanghai 5?”¹²⁸ Russian-Turkey relations have been defined by such pragmatism before, even in the face of fundamental foreign policy differences caused by ongoing conflicts such as in Syria. The strong personal chemistry between Putin and Erdoğan has almost certainly been a factor in ensuring that dialogue has continued between the two countries, especially on economic issues, if nothing else to remind the west of Turkey’s importance to the region at large.

Turkey’s future accession to the EU remains in doubt. Erdoğan’s policies, ongoing post-coup purges, European attitudes towards Turkey and the continued fight against the PKK seem to be conspiring against Turkish membership. However, Turkey is in a very powerful position given its pivotal ability to control migrant flows into Europe. By gaining visa free travel to the European Schengen Zone, Erdoğan could also be able to deliver a major EU benefit to Turkish citizens without committing to wider EU regulations, law and policy dictates. The shift toward closer economic cooperation with Russia, despite their differing interests in Syria and elsewhere is a clear sign of Erdoğan’s pragmatism when it comes to international relations. At present EU accession is on hold, with no ‘chapters’ open; it is doubtful if the process will ever be completed.

NATO AND TURKEY 2002-2017

Turkey has presented both a challenge and an opportunity to NATO throughout its history, but especially as it continues to restructure its roles, missions, and capabilities to address emerging security challenges. Since Turkey’s accession in 1952, NATO has played a crucial role in enabling Turkey’s security strategy in the region. During the Cold War, the Turkish government relied on

¹²⁷ “Euro MPs vote to freeze Turkey EU membership talks,” *BBC News Europe*, 24 November 16, accessed 18 January 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38090121>.

¹²⁸ Selin Girit, “Turkey and the EU: The end of the affair?” *BBC News Turkey*, 22 November 2016, accessed 18 January 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38055357>.

NATO membership and its bilateral alliance with the US to guarantee Turkey's security in the face of the Soviet Union's aggression. The pro-Western Kemalist leaning elite that dominated the country's foreign and defense policies viewed Turkey's affiliation with NATO and ties to the US as vital as this ensured Turkey's status as a core member of NATO and a partner to be considered and reckoned with. Turkey serves as NATO's southeastern bulwark, controlling the straits between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea and sharing a border with Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Although the Cold War ended in 1991, NATO's importance to Turkey remains. However, finding an appropriate place for Turkey in the evolving EU-NATO balance has proven exceptionally difficult given Turkey's continued exclusion from the EU and the ongoing dispute with the government of the Republic of Cyprus.¹²⁹

Turkish officials have waged a protracted campaign to influence EU security decisions and compel Greek Cypriots in the Republic of Cyprus to reach a political settlement with the Turkish Cypriot minority. In pursuit of these goals, Turkish policymakers have proved willing to block EU-NATO cooperation on important security issues. A recurring problem is that Turkey is a member of NATO but not the EU, whereas the RoC is a member of the EU but not NATO. The two countries have used the consensus rules of each organization to prevent one organization from cooperating with the other on important security issues such as energy exploration rights and the ongoing migrant crisis. Turkish objections to the possible leaking of sensitive NATO military information to the RoC have limited ties between the EU and NATO since the RoC joined the EU in 2004. There is no sign of this impasse ending at present.

Despite disagreements over the RoC and information sharing with the EU, NATO remains an indispensable partner for Turkey; the reverse is also true. NATO uses the Incirlik airbase as a critical hub for conducting reconnaissance and strike missions against Daesh in Syria given the

¹²⁹ Jonathan Gorvett, "One Cyprus?" *Foreign Affairs*, 27 October 2016, accessed 18 January 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/cyprus/2016-10-27/one-cyprus>.

short transit time to target areas. Turkey also hosts a major component of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA), which is designed to deal with the threat posed by Iranian short- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles to US assets, personnel, and allies in Europe.¹³⁰ Turkey also hosts NATO's Land Command headquarters, located in Izmir and one of NATO's six Rapid Deployable Corps high readiness headquarters that can be quickly mobilized to lead NATO forces on missions within or beyond NATO territory.¹³¹

The 15 July 2016 coup attempt has caused serious issues for Turkey-NATO security cooperation and effectiveness, with some even pondering expelling Turkey from NATO.¹³² However, it is clear that Turkey will remain an indispensable partner in the fight against VEOs in the region, regardless of internal politics. Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website makes the importance of NATO to Turkey very clear: "Turkey attaches the utmost importance to NATO's role in maintaining security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and in providing a forum for political-military consultations on topics of interest to its members."¹³³

¹³⁰ Tom Z. Collina, "The European Phased Adaptive Approach at a Glance," *Arms Control Association Washington, D.C.*, May 2013, accessed 18 January 2017, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Phasedadaptiveapproach>.

¹³¹ "The Rapid Deployable Corps," *NATO press release*, 26 November 2012, accessed 18 January 2017, www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics50088.htm.

¹³² Loulla-Mae Eleftheriou-Smith, "Turkey coup could threaten country's NATO membership, John Kerry suggests," *Independent online*, 18 July 2016, accessed 18 January 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkey-coup-could-threaten-countrys-nato-membership-john-kerry-warns-a7142491.html>. Kerry stated that "Turkey could fall foul of NATO's requirement with respect to democracy if it fails to uphold the rule of law in the wake of an attempted coup."

¹³³ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's Relations with NATO," 2011, accessed 18 January 2017, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/nato.en.mfa>.

CONCLUSIONS

In domestic security policy delivery, there has not been an effective framework outlined by the AKP, other than Davutoğlu's idea of a "security/freedom balance." Because of this lack of a coherent framework, Turkish domestic security policy, since 2002, has been ineffective at realizing state security goals. The AKP, elected on a platform of opposition to traditional draconian Turkish State security methods, has failed to capitalize on its early diplomatic successes with the PKK and wider Kurdish population. Instead, as the AKP power base has become more secure and Erdoğan has been granted more powers first as Prime Minister and then President, Turkish policymakers have been swayed from using diplomacy to solve internal security issues and have reverted to using force as the primary tool of negotiation with the Kurds. The fragile ceasefires of the period 2012 through 2015 with the PKK have been broken by both sides as the basic societal and economic issues of the Kurds in the southeast have remained unresolved, prompting further Kurdish resistance. Domestic freedom of speech, and the ability of opposition political parties to criticize AKP policies have been sharply curtailed, especially since the unsuccessful 15 July 2016 coup attempt. The purge of government officials in the military, judiciary and in the education system has dramatically altered the balance of power in Erdoğan's favor, with little sign of this shift abating.

Given recent events, there is only a slim chance that the AKP government will allow a softening of its security policies towards the Kurdish regions or to those it considers its political opposition. All of this has resulted in a Turkish state that, driven by post-coup paranoia, is likely to use force, repression of the media, and other more nefarious means to achieve its internal security goals. This is likely to yield continued internal security issues with the Kurds as well as continued unrest amongst sections of the populace that are in opposition to the AKP's Islamist and less Kemalist leaning secular vision for Turkey. The military, cowed by the purges after the aborted coup attempt, is now powerless to fulfill its traditional role as guarantor of the Turkish Republic.

Turkey continues to formulate foreign security policy that is hindered by an overemphasis on its imperial past and which places too much reliance on Turkey's self-styled role as a central actor in the region; this approach is hindering the effective delivery of security policy as the legacy of Empire is not a helpful reference point for security policy formulation. The role of Islam and in particular the backing of Islamic parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood has also undermined Turkish foreign security policy delivery. However, the export of Turkish soft power has generally been a success story and Turkey has increased its reputation in the Horn of Africa (e.g. Somalia) and in other regions through the provision of large sums of aid. This is particularly important to the U.S. as Turkey can act as a counterweight to other Sunni regional powers such as Saudi Arabia who have exported a brand of Sunni Islam that has at times been counterproductive.

The impact of Ahmet Davutoğlu on Turkey's delivery of foreign security policy has been profound (more so than Erdoğan) and as such the 'Davutoğlu doctrine' that he articulated in 2010 (his six principles) provides the most appropriate means to judge the efficacy of Turkish foreign security policy.

The first principle aimed to strike a balance between freedom and security. Turkey has failed in achieving this balance; the Turkish State is considerably more repressive than when the AKP came to power in 2002 and the security situation is worse in 2017 than at any time since the 1990s. The conflict with the PKK has reignited in spectacular fashion and since the coup attempt in July 2016, Turkey has reached a new low in suppression of the media and freedom of speech. By trying to avoid provoking Islamic extremists from targeting Turkish citizens, Turkey has paradoxically had to commit to a costly and potentially open ended intervention in Syria, ironically brought about by Daesh sponsored attacks inside Turkey.

The second principle envisioned an enhanced regional engagement with "Zero Problems" in [Turkey's] neighborhood. This policy has comprehensively failed. Turkey has many problems with its neighbors. Turkey narrowly avoided conflict with Russia after a Russian SU24 attack

aircraft was shot down by a Turkish F-16 on 30 November 2015 then on 24 August 2016 it intervened in Syria (Operation EUPHRATES SHIELD), after it became clear that without intervening, a Kurdish proto-state would become a reality on Turkey's southern border. Turkey's relationship with Israel was badly damaged after the Israeli operation to board the Palestinian relief fleet on (the so called Mavi Marmara incident) on 31 May 2010, although relations have since gradually normalised. Relations with the US administration have been fraught for most of the Obama presidency. There are deep rooted schisms with Iraq over territory and Kurdish issues and it is uncertain how Turkey will fare with the Trump administration. Turkey's relationship with Egypt is poor given Turkey's unstinting support for the Muslim Brotherhood. Turkey has no influence with Syria given its unstinting calls for Assad to be removed.

The third principle envisioned an effective diplomacy towards neighboring regions. This has generally been ineffective, with Turkey's standing in the Trans-Asia and Middle East regions being at best maintained but certainly not furthered. Turkey's strategic choice of supporting the Muslim Brotherhood has proved to be ill founded and its attempts to mediate in the Israel-Hamas dispute and the Syrian civil war have been ineffective.

The fourth principle aimed to ensure that Turkey attained complementarity with global actors. Under Erdoğan, this has not been realized. Turkey has proved to be a difficult partner for the United States to work with in Syria and Turkey's relationship with Russia has, on balance, not been complimentary as it is balanced in Russia's favor. Turkey's efforts to leverage the Arab Gulf States in support of its foreign security goals has also not been successful. Turkey has achieved a level of economic cooperation with Iran out of necessity, but on the security front this has not been beneficial given Iran's unstinting support for the Assad regime in Syria.

The fifth principle was the effective use of international forums and new initiatives in order to galvanize action on matters of common concern. Turkey has sought to play a much wider role in international organization such as the UNHCR, leveraging its position in the migration crisis

to some effect in improving overall access for Turkish citizens into the EU. Using its burgeoning overseas aid and religion vectored budgets has also allowed Turkey to gain a better position in forums such as the UN. However, post the 15 July 2016 coup, relations with the EU and OSCE remain at a low ebb and the prospects for Turkish accession into the EU remain remote.

The sixth and final principle of Turkish foreign policy was to create a “new perception of Turkey” through an increased focus on public diplomacy. This has been more effective through the medium of the export of Turkish soft power to outlying regions, by using aid and the Turkish vision of Sunni Islam as a unifying force.

In 2017, Turkey finds itself with limited strategic options. Turkey’s external relations are degraded and it finds itself at odds with its key strategic partner the United States. The relationship with Russia is not in Turkey’s favor – Turkey needs Russia more than Russia needs Turkey to achieve its security goals. Turkish EU accession is now more remote than ever and the intractable Cyprus dispute drags on. Internally, the security situation post the July 2016 coup is parlous; this is undermining Turkey’s ability to project effective external security policy. Unless Erdoğan and the AKP change course and perhaps move back towards the Kemalist vision of Turkey, then the prospects for stability in Turkey and its near abroad are grim.

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